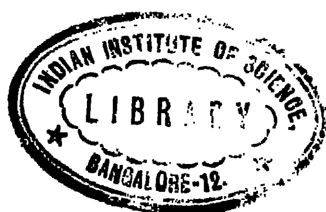
THE COLLECTED WORKS OF

MAHATMA GANDHI

XXXV

(September 1927–January 1928)





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PREFACE

During the period of four and a half months covered by this volume—September 16, 1927 to January 31, 1928—Gandhiji continued his tour of the South, interrupted it for an interview with the Viceroy, visited Ceylon and then Orissa, attended the annual session of the Congress at Madras in December and returned to Ahmedabad. The long tour was primarily for collection of funds for khadi work and had brought him Rs. 1,63,905 in Tamilnad and Travancore and Rs. 105,000 in Ceylon, of which modest sums he kept and published meticulous accounts (Appendix II). During Gandhiji's absence in Ceylon, the appointment of a Statutory Commission, which later came to be known as the Simon Commission, was announced and the volume ends with forebodings of a nation-wide storm of protest against it.

During his tour of the South, Gandhiji had been expressing his views on the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question and incidentally on *varnashrama*. His position on *varnashrama* dharma had given rise to apprehensions among social reformers and he found it necessary to emphasize that his "conception of *varnashrama* has nothing in common with its present distinction of untouchability and caste. *Varna* has nothing to do with superiority or inferiority. *Varna* is the recognition of a definite law that governs human happiness. And it simply means that we must treasure and conserve all the good qualities that we inherit from our ancestors" (p. 81). Writing on 17-11-1927, he explained his views more fully in reply to criticism from a correspondent and concluded: "This scheme may sound Utopian. I however prefer to live in this Utopia of my imagination to trying to live up to the unbridled licence of a society that I see tottering to its disruption" (p. 263). The stern rebuke which Gandhiji administered to youthful critics of Shri Rajagopalachari (p. 32) indicates the intensity of the prevailing bitterness. The discussions with non-Brahmin leaders in Tamilnad summarized by Mahadev Desai (Appendix I) and the *Young India* article in reply to Sjt. Nadkarni (pp. 259-63) show Gandhiji's attempt to reconcile the past and the future in the living present. To the critics who called his ideas Utopian, he urged, "It is surely given to individuals to live their own Utopias" (p. 263) without waiting for acceptance by society.

Besides appealing at every meeting for help in the cause of khadi, Gandhiji had something special to say which established

a personal bond between him and the audience. At Kanadukathan, addressing the Chettiars, a wealthy community of the South, he said, "Let us not wear our wealth so loudly" and he advised them to see that their charities were wise (p. 20). He was visibly touched by the affection of the audience at the auction at Karaikudi (p. 39). At Tuticorin Gandhiji referred to his attempts to learn Tamil so as to study the *Tirukural* in original (p. 91). He took leave of the South on October 27 with a warm message (p. 202).

Meanwhile, Gandhiji had received an invitation from the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, to meet him in Delhi on November 2. In reply to a message from Vithalbhai Patel, Gandhiji had expressed his desire to be kept out of the discussion since he was not hopeful of being able to render any useful service at that juncture. The result of the interview seemed to Gandhiji to have more than justified his pessimism. Writing to Prabhashankar Pattani on November 8, he said: "I felt that I need not have been called to Delhi. . . . The Viceroy did not wish to know others' views; he wished only to express his own" (p. 223). Varying versions of what took place at the interview are given in Appendix V.

During the tour of Ceylon, from November 13 to 29, Gandhiji dwelt on the bonds that united Ceylon and India. Speaking to Buddhists in the Island he said: "It is my deliberate opinion that the essential part of the teachings of the Buddha now forms an integral part of Hinduism. It is impossible for Hindu India today to retrace her steps and go behind the great reformation that Gautama effected in Hinduism. . . . Gautama was himself a Hindu of Hindus. He was saturated with the best that was in Hinduism, and he gave life to some of the teachings that were buried in the Vedas and which were overgrown with weeds" (pp. 244-5). In an article in *Young India*, written before the visit to Ceylon in reply to the request of an American friend, Gandhiji had explained his attitude to Hinduism thus: "On examination, I have found it to be the most tolerant of all religions known to me. Its freedom from dogma makes a forcible appeal to me inasmuch as it gives the votary the largest scope for self-expression. Not being an exclusive religion, it enables the followers of that faith not merely to respect all the other religions, but it also enables them to admire and assimilate whatever may be good in the other faiths" (pp. 166-7). Speaking at the Y.M.C.A., Colombo, Gandhiji said: "The message of Jesus, as I understand it, is contained in his Sermon on the Mount unadulterated and taken as a whole . . . . If then I had to face

only the Sermon on the Mount and my own interpretation of it, I should not hesitate to say 'Oh yes, I am a Christian'. . . . But . . . much of what passes as Christianity is a negation of the Sermon on the Mount" (p. 248). To the young Buddhists in the audience Gandhiji said: "Don't be dazzled by the splendour that comes to you from the West. Do not be thrown off your feet by this passing show. . . do not be drawn away from the simplicity of your ancestors. A time is coming when those who are in the mad rush today of multiplying their wants . . . will retrace their steps . . . God the Compassionate and the Merciful, Tolerance-incarnate, allows Mammon to have his nine days' wonder" (pp. 250-1). But on the tenth day the ten-headed Ravana within us will have to be destroyed by Rama who too is within us. Thus he explained the symbolism of the Rama-Ravana war to the labourers in Ceylon (pp. 255-6). A world federation can be founded only on a true fellowship of faiths, where the innermost prayer of all "should be that a Hindu should be a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim and a Christian a better Christian" (p. 461).

On his return from Ceylon, Gandhiji hastened to Orissa but had to cancel a major part of the tour owing to high blood-pressure. The little glimpse he had of the scene, however, filled him with anguish and made him write: "The long-deferred Orissa visit has come to fill the bitter cup of sorrow and humiliation" (p. 407). Never since the days of Champaran had he witnessed "such death-like quiet" (p. 408), and he exhorted the local workers to teach the people "to shed the oppressive nervous timidity bordering on cowardice" (p. 409).

The Congress session at Madras revealed Gandhiji's differences with other leaders on two major issues, namely, Hindu-Muslim unity and the definition of the country's political goal. On the former, he had earlier confessed that he was "out of tune with the prevailing atmosphere" (p. 16). Gandhiji, therefore, was not enthusiastic about the Unity Resolution (Appendix IX) passed at the Congress, though he himself seems to have helped in drafting it. Writing about it in *Young India*, he said: "It was wholly bad in its original form. As it has finally emerged from the Subjects Committee and passed, all that can be said for it is that it is innocuous and that it is the best that could be had at this stage of the national evolution. But I for one cannot enthuse over it. I can only tolerate it as passable" (p. 436).

Gandhiji's differences with the other leaders, particularly with Jawaharlal Nehru, centred mainly round the definition of the

political goal of the country. He described the Independence Resolution as "hastily conceived and thoughtlessly passed" (p. 438). This criticism provoked from Jawaharlal a letter of angry protest (Appendix X). In reply to this letter, Gandhiji wrote: "Though I was beginning to detect some differences in viewpoint between you and me, I had no notion whatsoever of the terrible extent of these differences. . . . I see quite clearly that you must carry on open warfare against me and my views. . . . I can't conceal from you my grief that I should lose a comrade so valiant, so faithful, so able and so honest as you have always been; but in serving a cause, comradeships have got to be sacrificed" (pp. 469-70). These theoretical differences, however, were overshadowed by the necessities of action to demonstrate the country's resentment against the visiting Simon Commission.

Among the letters included in this volume are several that Gandhiji wrote to Mirabehn, one a "soothing ointment after a severe operation" (p. 57). In a letter to Kishorelal Mashruwala (pp. 159-61), he explained the duty of a follower of non-violence when called upon to give evidence against a burglar. Compassion, he argued, had no effect unless it was natural and genuine. In his own case he admitted, two days after his meeting the Shankaracharya of Kanchi: "I have practically stopped taking interest in the Hindu-Muslim problem because I feel that the compassion in my heart is insufficient or is unnatural. Unnatural does not mean pretended, but only that it has not gone deeper than the intellect" (p. 160). In letters to Gangabehn Vaidya (pp. 162-3) and the Ashram Women (p. 164) he referred to the commotion produced in the Ashram by his criticism of the conflicts among them and advised them how they could resolve those conflicts by regarding themselves as members of a family. Writing to C. F. Andrews, he could not resist the temptation of having a dig at his doctors: "And three doctors and three instruments gave different readings yesterday — 200, 180, 160!" (p. 397).

NOTE TO THE READER

In reproducing English material, every endeavour has been made to adhere strictly to the original. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected and words abbreviated in the text generally spelt out. Variant spellings of names have, however, been retained as in the original.

Matter in square brackets has been supplied by the Editors. Quoted passages, where these are in English, have been set up in small type and printed with an indent. Indirect reports of speeches and interviews, as also passages which are not by Gandhiji, have been set up in small type. In reports of speeches and interviews slight changes and omissions, where necessary, have been made in passages not attributed to Gandhiji.

While translating from Gujarati and Hindi, efforts have been made to achieve fidelity and also readability in English. Where English translations are available, they have been used with such changes as were necessary to bring them into conformity with the original.

The date of an item has been indicated at the top right-hand corner; if the original is undated, the inferred date is supplied within square brackets, the reasons being given where necessary. The date given at the end of an item alongside the source is that of publication. The writings are placed under the date of publication, except where they carry a date-line or where the date of writing has special significance and is ascertainable.

References to Volume I of this series are to the August 1958 edition. References to *An Autobiography* cite only the Part and Chapter, in view of the varying pagination in different editions.

In the source-line, S.N. stands for documents available in the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G.N. refers to those available in the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Sangrahalaya, New Delhi; C.W. denotes documents secured by the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Appendices provide background material relevant to the text. A list of sources and a chronology for the period covered by the volume are also provided at the end.

Some letters to Jawaharlal Nehru, recently released, have been reproduced in the Addenda.

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CONTENTS

1. SPEECH AT TANJORE

September 16, 1927

I had hoped on coming to Tanjore today to discuss the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question[1] here and I had the pleasure of having a brief discussion with some of the friends this afternoon. I am not free nor is it necessary for me to discuss and place before you the contents of our discussion. But I was exceedingly glad of this discussion. I now understand the movement perhaps a little better than I did before the discussion. I have placed my humble view before those friends, of which they are at liberty to make what use they like. But throughout the discussion I saw a note of one thing which seemed to oppress these friends. They seemed to think that I had identified myself with the notion of inherited superiority and inferiority. I assured them that nothing was farther from my thought and told them that I would gladly explain my meaning of *varnashrama*[2] more fully than I have done in order to remove the slightest misunderstanding as to this question of superiority. In my opinion there is no such thing as inherited or acquired superiority. I believe in the rock-bottom doctrine of Advaita[3] and my interpretation of Advaita excludes totally any idea of superiority at any stage whatsoever. I believe implicitly that all men are born equal. All—whether born in India or in England or America or in any circumstances whatsoever—have the same soul as any other. And it is because I believe in this inherent equality of all men that I fight the doctrine of superiority which many of our rulers arrogate to themselves. I have fought this doctrine of superiority in South Africa inch by inch, and it is because of that inherent belief that I delight in calling myself a scavenger, a spinner, a weaver, a farmer and a labourer. And I have fought against the Brahmins themselves wherever they have claimed any superiority for themselves either by reason of their birth or by reason of their subsequently acquired knowledge. *I consider that it is unmanly for any person to claim superiority over a fellow-being.* And there is the amplest warrant for the belief that I

[1] For Mahadev Desai's catechism on the subject, *vide* Appendix I.

[2] The organization of society into four castes, and the division of life into four stages

[3] The view that the *atman*, the self in man, is not distinct from the Brahman, the Absolute; literally, 'non-dualism'.

am enunciating in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and I am therefore through and through with every non-Brahmin when he fights this monster of superiority, whether it is claimed by a Brahmin or by anybody else. He who claims superiority at once forfeits his claim to be called a man. That is my opinion.

But in spite of all my beliefs that I have explained to you, I still believe in varnashrama dharma. Varnashrama dharma to my mind is a law which, however much you and I may deny, cannot be abrogated. To admit the working of that law is to free ourselves for the only pursuit in life for which we are born. Varnashrama dharma is humility. Whilst I have said that all men and women are born equal, I do not wish therefore to suggest that qualities are not inherited, but on the contrary I believe that just as everyone inherits a particular form so does he inherit the particular characteristics and qualities of his progenitors, and to make this admission is to conserve one's energy. That frank admission, if we will act up to it, would put a legitimate curb upon our material ambitions, and thereby our energy is set free for extending the field of spiritual research and spiritual evolution. It is this doctrine of varnashrama dharma which I have always accepted. You would be entitled to say that this is not how *varnashrama* is understood in these days. I have myself said time without number that *varnashrama* as it is at present understood and practised is a monstrous parody of the original, but in order to demolish this distortion let us not seek to demolish the original. And if you say that the idealistic *varnashrama* which I have placed before you is quite all right you have admitted all that I like you to admit. I would also urge on you to believe with me that no nation, no individual, can possibly live without proper ideals. And if you believe with me in the idealistic *varnashrama* you will also strive with me to reach that ideal so far as may be. As a matter of fact the world has not anywhere been able to fight against this law. What has happened and what must happen in fighting against the law is to hurt ourselves and to engage in a vain effort; and I suggest to you that your fight will be all the more successful if you understand all that our forefathers have bequeathed to us and engage in fighting all the evil excrescences that have grown round this great bequest. And if you accept what I have ventured to suggest to you, you will find that the solution of the Brahmin and non-Brahmin question also, in so far as it is concerned with the religious aspect, becomes very easy. As a non-Brahmin I would seek to purify Brahminism in so far as a non-Brahmin can, but not to destroy it. I would dislodge

the Brahmin from the arrogation of superiority or from places of profit. Immediately a Brahmin becomes a profiteering agency he ceases to be a Brahmin. But I would not touch his great learning wherever I see it. And whilst he may not claim superiority by reason of learning I myself must not withhold that meed of homage that learning, wherever it resides, always commands. But I must not go deeper into the subject before a large audience of this kind.

After all I must fall upon one sovereign remedy which I think is applicable for all the ills of life. And that is, in whatever fight we engage, the fight should be clean and straight, and there should not be the slightest departure from truth and ahimsa. And if we will keep our carriage safely on these two rails you will find that our fight even though we may commit a thousand blunders will always smell clean and will be easier fought. And even as a train that is derailed comes to a disastrous end, so shall we, if we be derailed off these two rails, come to a disaster. A man who is truthful and does not mean ill even to his adversary will be slow to believe charges even against his foes. He will, however, try to understand the viewpoints of his opponents and will always keep an open mind and seek every opportunity of serving his opponents. I have endeavoured to apply this law in my relations with Englishmen and Europeans in general in South Africa as well as here and not without some success. How much more then should we apply this law in our homes, in our relations, in our domestic affairs, in connection with our own kith and kin?

Young India, 29-9-1927

2. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, TRICHINOPOLY[1]

September 17, 1927

FRIENDS,

I seem to have come to the end of my resources. The programme in Trichinopoly is much stiffer than I can comfortably

[1] Gandhiji, who looked very tired, handed a written speech which C. Rajagopalachari read to the meeting. During Gandhiji's tour in South India and Ceylon, he received purses for the Khadi Fund. He also made on-the-spot collections and auctioned articles presented to him at the meetings. For a detailed statement of these collections, *vide* Appendix II.

go through. But I cannot afford to disappoint those who have arranged so many functions. Dr. Rajan, as my medical adviser, has therefore devised a plan whereby I can go through the functions, with as little strain as possible and that is to observe complete silence at these functions, with apologies for my inability to speak to you, as I should like to if my health permitted. It is with much pleasure I have laid the foundation-stone of the market and I thank you for your address and commend my Mayavaram speech[1] to your attention.

The Hindu, 17-9-1927

3. APPEAL FOR INFORMATION

Shri Kantilal Harivallabhdas Parekh left the Satyagraha Ashram on the morning of Monday, the 25th July, 1927, and thereafter on the same day he was seen at several places in Ahmedabad. It is not known where he was on the 26th or the 27th; however, on Thursday the 28th some inmates of the Ashram saw him swimming, or rather being dragged by the current, in the Sabarmati. He is a good swimmer. In case he is hiding himself anywhere it will be an act of kindness if he himself or some acquaintance or relation of his gives some information about him. This good news will bring joy to his father and his old grandmother plunged in grief because of his absence.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 18-9-1927

4. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

September 18, 1927

DEAR SATIS BABU,

I have your letter. I did write to Prafulla Babu. Here is Prafulla Babu's letter. I do not remember having pressed him to rejoin the Pratishthan. I have written as much to him. Let him now decide whether he remains on the Trust Board or not.

I look to you, as you have put it, to conquer Suresh Babu and everyone else. It is the best thing to blame ourselves when people cannot get on well with us. Boundless charity necessarily

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXXIV, pp. 527-32.

includes all or it ceases to be boundless. We must be strict with ourselves and lenient with our neighbours. For we know not their difficulties and what they overcome.

With love,

Yours,
BAPU

[PS.]

I hope you have sent the amount to Abhoy Ashram.

From a photostat: G.N. 1576

5. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

TRICHINOPOLY,
Silence Day [September 19, 1927][1]

SISTERS,

I get your notes regularly. I keep an eye on your work from here. One who works according to one's full capacity does all that can be expected of one. But in our work we should develop the *Gita* attitude which we want to have. That attitude is that, whatever we do, we do it selflessly in a spirit of service. The spirit of service means a spirit of dedication to God. One who does so, loses all idea of self. He has no hatred for anybody. On the contrary, he is generous to others. Even about the smallest piece of service you render, ask yourselves from time to time whether you have this same attitude.

Ramaniklalbhai raised a question on what I wrote to you about myself. You have not told me whether all of you understood what I said in reply. I wish that you would discuss what I write to you, and ask me about things to which you can find no answer.

My health continues to be good enough to let me carry on my work.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3665

[1] Gandhiji was in Trichinopoly on this date.

6. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

Silence Day [September 19, 1927][1]

BHAI HARIBHAU,

Your letter. If Swami and Jamnalalji agree, you can count on me too. I cannot understand how *Hindi Navajivan* will be ready in time. But it is not for me to worry on that account.

How is Martand?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

On re-reading your letter I find that two points have been left unanswered. I shall write later about the article on khadi.

I might return to the Ashram in the month of January. It is a good idea to start an Ashram near Ajmer.

BAPU

BHAI HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA
KHADI KARYALAYA
AJMER

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 6058. Courtesy: Haribhau Upadhyaya

7. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

TRICHINOPOLY,
[September] 20 *[1927]*[2]

JAMNALAL SETH
CARE RAMNARAYAN
MANGALDAS RD., POONA

TELL MIRABEHN IF STILL THERE NOT BE HASTY. AM PERFECTLY WELL. GOD'S VOICE OFTEN INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM ECHOES OF OUR FEAR. IN THIS RAPID MARCHING IN HEAT HER PRESENCE IN HER DELICATE HEALTH HINDRANCE. IF SHE WANTS COME DESPITE MY WARNING SHE IS WELCOME.

BAPU

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 68

[1] From the postmark

[2] Gandhiji was in Trichinopoly on this date.

8. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

TRICHINOPOLY,
[September 20, 1927][1]

I observe that my first speech in Trichinopoly[2] has been misunderstood abroad, and has caused anxiety to friends. I would like to assure my friends, however, that there is not the slightest cause for any anxiety. My statement, that I had come to the end of my resources, had a local reference, and it was therefore properly understood in Trichinopoly. What I wanted to say was that I had hitherto taken up engagements up to the limit and that I could not comfortably go through a heavier programme in Trichinopoly. This was a warning to friends in Trichinopoly and to the committees in the places yet to be visited, that they should not have a multiplicity of engagements. One meeting a day is about all that I would have attended so far as my heart is concerned. Doctor Rajan overhauled me completely, and neither he nor I have any anxiety. The blood-pressure stands at where it was in Bangalore. Otherwise too, I am feeling quite well, and, if I do not allow myself to be overworked, I have no misgivings about my ability to go through the settled programme. Friends about me are taking extraordinary precautions for my protection, and I am myself wide awake. I hope therefore that there would be no anxiety felt about my tour; and I would request newspaper reporters and editors not to send or publish any reports about my health before submitting them to me, or to those who are in charge of me.

The Hindu, 21-9-1927

9. SPEECH AT NATIONAL COLLEGE, TRICHINOPOLY

September 20, 1927

I thank you for what I thought was an address and the purse. I should like to know how many of you understood what I thought was an address, the thing that was read first in Sanskrit. Those who understood it, please raise your hands.[3] Those who did

[1] Released to the Press on this day

[2] *Vide* "Speech in Reply to Municipal Address, Trichinopoly", 17-9-1927.

[3] Only very few were raised.

not understand it, raise your hands.[1] I was ill prepared for such a performance at a students' meeting. Unfortunately, in our country, we have got altogether an overdose of humbug and spectacular effect and those who are responsible for this function should have erased all such things out of their proceedings which could not be understood by the vast majority here. (Applause.) This applause also seems to me to be entirely out of place. It is almost notice to me to stop talking, and next time there is applause, you will find that I will take it as notice to quit. Seriously speaking, students' life ought to be regarded as a very serious affair, and since students should all be sportsmen, the serious side of life should be taken by them in a sportsmanlike way. In order to make ourselves, including myself whom I regard as still a student, serious in a sportsmanlike manner, I suggest that next time you all, since the majority of you are Hindus, learn Sanskrit, so that if a Sanskrit verse is recited you should all understand it.

I am afraid that if I examined you again in another matter, you will make the same sorry exhibition that you made just a moment ago. Students of a national college would, for instance, be expected to know Hindi, but hardly one per cent of you would raise your hands if I ask how many know Hindi.

You talk of past February and say that a stirring appeal was made to you by Mr. Rajagopalachari and Shankerlal Banker on the economics of khadi. A stirring appeal is one that stirs us to the depths of our hearts, but if I ask you to raise your hands, you will again make a sorry exhibition and show that very few of you are wearers of khadi. If my surmise is correct it is wrong on your part to say that the appeal made to you in February was a stirring appeal. Compared to other purses, I do not regard your purse as a small purse at all, but I accept your humble suggestion that your purse is really not up to the mark, and if you had been really stirred to the depth of your hearts, you could have collected much more than you have done. Instead of my illness being regarded as an interruption in the course of your collections, you would have used the additional time gained for collecting additional moneys. My illness should really have given a point to the stirring nature of that appeal and you should have said to yourselves: "Now that this old man has become ill and he is really a capable organizer of khadi, let us put our shoulders to the wheel and make a double effort and therefore we shall double our subscriptions, put away our foreign cloth and all

[1] Many were raised.

wear khadi." Instead of this obvious result following from the appeal, you tell me that my illness sent you to sleep; but it is never too late to mend, never too late to learn. Colleges are not closed down for ever. You still remain students. I shall presently leave Trichinopoly, but khadi won't have left Trichinopoly or India. *Daridranarayana*[1] still knocks at your doors. Khadi still awaits development at your hands. The khadi purse, you don't give me for my pleasure. You give it in the name of and for the sake of *Daridranarayana*. It has therefore a constant call on your purse. Let me then hope that you will not be remiss in your efforts on behalf of khadi, that you will make up your Hindi, because you have got a Hindi *pracharak*[2] here and that you will make up your Sanskrit, and let me also commend to your attention the addresses that I have given to students in other places and let me ask you to understand the message in those addresses.

The Hindu, 21-9-1927

10. SPEECH AT Y.M.C.A., PUTTUR

September 20, 1927

THE CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

With you I also miss the presence of Mr. Hayward. I had the pleasure of meeting him and having a brief chat with him before he went. I am sorry I shall not be able to give you anything like a speech, but as I was coming to this meeting this morning, I asked myself what it was that I would wish the Y.M.C.A. in India to be. As you are aware, my association with Christian Indians is growing day by day. Ten years ago, I did not have the privilege of coming in such close contact with Christian Indians as I do nowadays, and I have noticed in coming in contact with so many Christian Indians and in contact with so many Christian Associations throughout the land that very often the word Christian is understood to mean European. I said to myself as I was driving here this morning how nice it would be if the Y.M.C.A. were not really synonymous with the Young Men's European Association. The word "European" has not to me, as to many millions of people, perhaps the same meaning and

[1] God in the form of the poor

[2] Teacher; literally, 'one who spreads'

content as the word Christian, and I feel that very often Christianity itself becomes a restricted thing when it is mixed up with Europeanism. It is not at all, in my humble opinion, necessary for a single Indian to cease to be Indian, because he calls himself Christian. To accept Christianity, or a change in one's religion is acceptance of a new life; therefore, I should expect anyone who changes his religion with a true heart to broaden his own nationality. If he ceases to think of his neighbours, he is not likely to think of those beyond that limit of his neighbours. I say this to Christian and Muslim friends and all those whom I meet in India and who have made India their land, or to whom India is the land of their birth. Let these associations then be not forces of disruption, but forces for conserving all that is good, noble and honest[1] in this land. For the rest, I commend to your attention the remarks I made to the Y.M.C.A. in Madras[2]. I thank you for having given me this opportunity of meeting you.

The Hindu, 21-9-1927

11. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, TRICHINOPOLY

September 20, 1927

DEAR SISTERS,

It gives me much pleasure to be able to attend this meeting. I do not want to keep you for any length of time. I just want to say that you ought to take a leading part in the national movement that is going on at the present moment in India—I mean the khadi work and the message of the spinning-wheel. It is work that is designed to deliver India from the gnawing poverty which she is suffering from. In this distress millions of our sisters are sharers. They need not be in that distress, if you and I will do our duty. They starve because they have no work in their own villages. Time was when they had no need to starve, for one hundred years ago every hut[3] in our villages had its own spinning-wheel. Whenever there was time left, our sisters living in villages used to spin yarn. Khadi that was woven out of this yarn was worn by all the people, rich and poor. One of the

[1] The source has "stand best". Perhaps Gandhiji had in mind the New Testament, Philippians, iv. 8.

[2] On September 4, 1927; *vide* Vol. XXXIV.

[3] The source has "hamlet".

reasons why the spinning-wheel died out was that you and I left off wearing khadi. Now, the movement has been set afoot in order to reinstate the spinning-wheel in its original state, and the movement cannot be proceeded with, without your assistance. The assistance you can render is for all of you to discard your foreign saris and wear khadi. It is your duty and my duty to think of these poor people, but this work cannot proceed without money. You are therefore expected to contribute as much as possible, and all over India your sisters have been giving me their moneys and also their jewellery. I see that you state in your address that your jewellery is the result of your own thrift. I personally do not believe in it, for the jewellery has been given to you and not made out of your own moneys earned by your own labour, but your jewellery is undoubtedly *streedhanam*[1] and I want you to share it with the poorest of your sisters. If you will have India the land of holiness, then you should all become like Sita, and the beauty of Sita lay not in her personal appearance and in her jewellery but in her heart. A woman is adorable, not for the jewellery she wears, but for the purity of her heart. I therefore urge you, if you believe that khadi will solve all the distress of India, to a certain extent, to part with the money that you have brought and your jewellery also, if you can give it to the cause. If you will go a step further, I would ask you also to spare some time to turn the spinning-wheel. It is a fine occupation for women in their leisure hours and it would be much better for you to pass your time in this useful occupation than idle talk. Now, you will give what you can to the volunteers who will go in your midst.

The Hindu, 21-9-1927

12. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TRICHINOPOLY*

September 21, 1927

Mahatmaji, in the course of his speech, recalled the satyagraha days when he visited Trichy which gave him some of his best co-workers. Unity, which prevailed then among all classes, had given place to dissensions and in spite of many vicissitudes the country had passed through, khadi had remained absolutely steady. It did not admit of dissensions, because khadi permeated the masses, who had nothing of these dissensions. Trichy would have contributed much more but that money would be valueless, if khadi, produced by the

[1] A woman's private property over which she exercises independent control

sacred hands of villagers, was not used by them. When khadi became universal, it would not be necessary to extend monetary assistance. That khadi required a bounty showed they were not doing their duty by the starving millions, on whom depend their sustenance.

Mahatmaji then referred to the fouling of river water and said that, on one side of the sacred Cauvery is Trichinopoly and on the other Srirangam. What he was about to say was not peculiar to Trichy. It was common all over India. He wished to draw their attention to this because Trichinopoly had got an army of workers who could, if they would, tackle this very difficult problem. Continuing, he said:

I had the pleasure of having a talk with the Chairman of the Srirangam Municipality yesterday and the young men of Vivekananda Ashram at Srirangam this morning. Everybody admits that the sanitation of Srirangam is not in a good condition at all. In my humble opinion, the insanitation is not due to want of funds, nor is the fouling of river water due to want of funds. It is purely due to our criminal apathy. We refuse to see the dirt that is daily growing in front of us. It really requires an army of volunteers who would understand the ABC of sanitation and who would educate the people at large in the elementary laws of sanitary science. It cannot be right to wash our dirt in the same river from which we take our drinking water. Our river banks should be places of recreation for all, young and old, banks on which we could with the greatest safety and ease recline ourselves but it is just the river banks which we make unfit, even for walking with bare feet. It has become abundantly clear by this time that cholera comes out of filthy habits and nothing else. Immediately you cease to drink dirty water and take necessary precaution there is no fear of cholera. I understand that when the great floods overtook the South, as it has overtaken Orissa at present, cholera broke out in Trichinopoly and Srirangam and it was an infliction from God Himself because we people drank the river water which was made dirty by ourselves. In my opinion we sinned against God and man when we did not take care to keep mother earth and our river water clean. We have poetry enough in ourselves to call earth "mother earth" and deify all rivers of India. What a sacrilege it is to dirty "mother earth" in the manner we are doing and to make the waters of all rivers, which we deify, filthy! It is really a simple matter for the youth of Trichinopoly and Srirangam to make up their minds to educate the people and to visit river banks from morning to morning till they have eradicated the evil from their midst. We do not need

to become municipal councillors or have any appointment from any public body and the Government in order to do this work. Nor does it require a great deal of time. All that you need to do is merely to have a little bit of knowledge of sanitary science and a fixed determination to get rid of the evil which is undermining the health of the population. I hope therefore that you will all understand the humble message I have endeavoured to give you and do something to retrieve the honour of Trichinopoly and Srirangam and to make the Cauvery really sacred as we consider it.

Mahatmaji then referred to the eradication of the drink evil for which the young men had ample opportunities of service among the labouring population which was a great one here. Even as insanitation was undermining their health, the drink curse was undermining the health and morals of the labouring population. [Concluding, Gandhiji said:]

We have a real national awakening. It should express itself in all the necessary activities.

The Hindu, 21-9-1927

13. *SPEECH IN REPLY TO CITIZENS' ADDRESS, PUDUKOTTAH*

September 21, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for your address and your purse and more so for your having refrained from reading the address. I need hardly assure you that I have read your address. You say that you have been long waiting for a visit from me and waiting is reciprocal. You tell me in your address that you believe in the message of the spinning-wheel and khaddar and you tell me also that you here are really specially in need of a message on spinning-wheel because of the poverty of the peasantry. I know from my experience of other parts of our country that what you state is literally true. You tell me also that your Legislative Council has passed a resolution making hand-spinning compulsory in your schools. I congratulate the Council upon having adopted that wise and very necessary resolution. How I wish that you and I and all translate our beliefs and resolutions into practice! To pass resolutions and to own beliefs is the easiest thing in the world; for, they cost the believers or the movers of resolutions nothing.

But practice means organization, means learning how to do the thing and means going amongst people and a host of others. Now welcome rains have come and I assure you that I do not want to prolong my speech. I shall, however, close with a prayer that God will give you the strength and necessary wisdom to reduce your belief into practice. And if you have at all read my speeches during my Tamil Nadu tour I am sure you know what I would say if the rains did not threaten. For, the things that I have been talking in Madras and elsewhere are also common to you. Now that the rains seem to have stopped for a moment, I shall summarise some of them. . .[1]

The Hindu, 23-9-1927

14. LETTER TO PRAGJI DESAI

[Before *September 22, 1927*][2]

BHAISHRI PRAGJI,

I got your letter. You have been giving good help to Sastriji. Whatever the likely decision in your case, you need not feel worried. I am sure Sastriji must be doing something on his own to help you. Now that you have joined *Indian Opinion*, you must have given up the idea of earning money there. Am I right? How is Medh faring? How is your health? Whatever happens, do not be tempted by the luxuries there, and keep away from untruth, secrecy and so on.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5042

[1] Then Gandhiji spoke on prohibition, untouchability, sanitation, Brahmin-non-Brahmin question and funds for charkha.

[2] From the text this appears to have been written prior to "Letter to Pragji Desai," 23-9-1927 and "Letter to V. S. Srinivasa Sastri," 22-9-1927.

15. "*RANGILA RASUL*"

In spite of the goading of correspondents, wise and otherwise, I have hitherto resisted the temptation to be drawn into the controversy that has arisen over this pamphlet. I have endeavoured patiently to deal with these correspondents by private correspondence. But of late the correspondence has increased beyond my capacity to deal with it privately. The last letter is from a Muslim professor in Bihar. He sends me a newspaper cutting containing a letter rebuking me in that even I had chosen to join in the conspiracy of silence observed by the leading Hindus in general. The professor wants me to "reply sharp". I gladly do so in the hope that my correspondents will be satisfied with my good faith and understand the reason for my silence. As I do not read newspapers, save a local one, I know nothing about the "conspiracy of silence" by Hindu leaders. The newspaper I read most frequently just now is *The Hindu* and I do remember having seen in it a strong article against the *Rangila Rasul*. So far as I am concerned, long before many Mussalmans knew even of the existence of the pamphlet, it came into my possession. In order to test the veracity of my informant, I read it and wrote the following note[1] in *Young India*, dated 19th June, 1924:

Then followed protests from Arya Samajists enclosing viler writing against Arya Samajists and the great founder Rishi Dayanand, telling me that *Rangila Rasul* and such writings were in answer to the Muslim writings referred to above. I thereupon wrote the following second note[2] (*Young India*, 10th July, 1924):

Thus I had anticipated the Mussalman wrath. But in the present agitation the meeting-point ends there. I could not approve of the turn the agitation took. I regarded it as excessive and inflammatory. The attack against Justice Duleepsingh[3] was uncalled for, undeserved and hysterical. The judiciary is by no means above being influenced by the Government, but it would be wholly unfit to render justice if it was open to popular attacks, threats and insults. So far as the Judge's integrity was concerned,

[1] Not reproduced here; *vide* Vol. XXIV, p. 261.

[2] Not reproduced here; *vide* Vol. XXIV, pp. 365-6.

[3] Judge of the Punjab High Court who had on appeal acquitted the author of the pamphlet, prosecuted and sentenced by the lower courts under Section 153-A of the Indian Penal Code.

it should have satisfied any Mussalman that he condemned the pamphlet, as he did, in unmeasured terms. His reading of the section ought not to have been made a cause for virulent attack against him. That other judges have taken a different view from Justice Duleepsingh is irrelevant to the issue. Judges have been often known before now to have given honest and opposite interpretations of the same law. The agitation for strengthening the penal section may be wise. Personally I question the wisdom. Any stiffening of the section will react against ourselves, and will be utilized, as such sections have been utilized before, for strengthening the hold of British authority over our necks. But if Mussalmans or Hindus want to agitate for unequivocally bringing such writings under the criminal law, they have a right to do so.

I hold strong views about Government protection. Time was when we knew better and disdained the protection of law-courts in such matters. To stop anti-Muslim writings like the *Rangila Rasul* is the work of Hindus as to stop anti-Hindu writings is the work of Mussalmans. The leaders have either lost control over mud-flingers or are in sympathy with them. In any case Government protection will not make us tolerant of one another. Each hater of the other's religion will under a stiffer law seek secret channels of making vicious attacks on his opponent's religion, or writing vilely enough to provoke anger but veiled enough to avoid the penal clauses of the law. But then I recognize that at the present moment we are not acting as sane nationalists or as men of religion. We are seeking under cover of religion to wreak mad vengeance upon one another.

My correspondents, both Hindu and Mussalman, should understand that I am just now out of tune with the prevailing atmosphere. I recognize fully that I have no power over the fighters whether Hindu or Muslim. My solution for removing the tension is, I admit, not suited to the times. I therefore best serve the nation by holding my peace. But my faith in my solution is as immovable as my faith in the necessity and the possibility of real Hindu-Muslim unity. Though therefore my helplessness is patent, there is no hopelessness in me. And as I believe that silent prayer is often mightier than any overt act, in my helplessness I continuously pray in the faith that the prayer of a pure heart never goes unanswered. And with all the strength at my command, I try to become a pure instrument for acceptable prayer.

Young India, 22-9-1927

16. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

SABARMATI,[1]
September 22, 1927

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have now two letters from you to acknowledge. I am sorry you are still having trouble from the Transvaal friends. I hope, however, that you will not allow their defection to disturb your peace. I am watching things here and I would ask you not to worry over the notices that Aiyar and Co. may be able, now and then, to secure in the Press here of their activities. I suppose, I may safely say that no real stir will be made in India on the South African question unless I stir. That much credit, somehow or other, I still retain, and it is likely to survive your term of office. And so long as the Union Government continue to co-operate with you and do not reject your advances, I do not see what useful purpose can be served by my making a stir here.

The result of the Pragji and Medh[2] case is unfortunate. I think that they are right in rejecting the offer of a temporary certificate. I do not attach any importance to C.I.D. reports about Medh. If he did anything criminal they should prosecute him, but not use against him C.I.D. reports. He may not be a perfect human being, but I do not think that he is in any way worse than the average Indian there or, for the matter of that, here. The way I look upon the case is this. The understanding of 1914[3] was that there should be no colour bar, at least in theory. Therefore the Immigration Law, to read, does not show any colour bar. In practice six men were to be admitted annually on the ground of educational qualifications, and, so far as I recollect, the question of domicile was not to affect them. For, they carried their qualifications in their own persons. As I am writing from memory I am writing under correction. You will, however, examine the position for what it is worth. I do hope that a way will be found of accommodating them.

[1] Permanent address

[2] Two prominent Indians of Johannesburg who, on returning after a period of residence in India, had trouble in getting their domicile certificates renewed

[3] The Smuts-Gandhi Agreement; *vide* Vol. XII.

I am glad you like Phoenix and I should feel happy if it could really become, on occasions, a resting place for you. Andrews described what might have been a serious accident as Kallenbach was driving you from Pretoria to Johannesburg at break-neck speed, and one of the tyres of his fashionable motor burst. I wish you could persuade Kallenbach to come to India, if only to see me and return to his business. Miss Schlesin has given me a fascinating description of her interview with you. When I was in Madras I tried to seek out Mrs. Sastri, but I learnt that she was at Lucknow.

With love,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Letters of Srinivasa Sastri, pp. 167-8

17. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KANADUKATHAN[1]

September 22, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for this purse. I am both glad and sad to be in your midst. I want to have a heart-to-heart talk with you this evening. Being born in a Vaisya family, I suppose I may identify myself with you and claim to be a Chetti myself. I came in touch with your family life when I was in Rangoon with Dr. Mehta. I was at that time a youngster and as we walked through Mughal Street, he showed me the rows of verandahs and counters and pointed out people busily engaged practically the whole day long counting rupees on their wooden trays. He said that these were all Chettis and from their appearance and their verandahs I might make a mistake by thinking that these were all petty money-lenders. He said that they were not petty money-lenders but they were big money-lenders and some of them were fabulously rich. I had known some Chettis before this acquaintance with them in Rangoon and South Africa. I then knew some of them as my acquaintances but I did not know, as I knew in Rangoon, that you had monopolized practically the money-lending business in Rangoon. I then recall your acquaintance at close

[1] Extracts from Gandhiji's speeches at Kanadukathan, Karaikudi, Amaravatipur and Devakottah were strung together by Mahadev Desai under the title "Message to Chettinad", in *Young India*, 6-10-1927.

quarters in 1920[1] when I passed through Chettinad and made collections for Tilak Swaraj Fund. I well remember the extreme kindness that you showed me then and that you are repeating now. But at that time mine was really a hurricane tour and I had no leisure to think of anything else or to enquire into anything else and I was swaraj-mad. I am still for that matter swaraj-mad but God has chastened me. My little tin-pot plan for swaraj was not very evidently His. And He has now further blessed me with physical illness which makes it impossible for me to go on in that hurricane fashion. Thus it is possible for me to study your life and understand you better, much better, than I was able in 1920. The best and only way I can return your extreme kindness is to give you the result of my somewhat summary study. That study has been helped by two letters that I have from unknown friends in Chettinad giving me a description of your life.

But before I enter upon that let me urge you to make khadi your own much more fully than you seem to have done. If you wish it, you have the power of financing the whole of the khadi movement in Tamil Nadu and for that matter in the whole of India. As I have said to my Marwari friends, the Chettis of the North, I can say to you also that if you wish it you can really finance the khadi movement purely out of your superfluity. With your marvellous shrewdness you can even organize khadi. And so you will forgive me if I tell you that all the purses that I have been receiving since this morning on my way to this place have not, in any shape or form, given me real satisfaction. Though the amount may be, I have not counted it, a few thousands, it is really but a drop in the ocean of your own wealth. If you really believe in khadi, if you have understood the message of the spinning-wheel then, but not till then, I want you to give not little out of your plenty but much out of your plenty.

And what is khadi after all? Khadi represents the cause of the starving millions and let not those who have either riches or power, in the pride of their riches or power forget these starving millions. I urge you therefore to befriend this great cause of the starving millions and make that cause your own. And if you will but do so, you will discard all your foreign cloth and foreign fineries and get if you will the richest khadi you want and the finest khadi your taste may demand.

When I saw your houses choked with foreign furniture, your houses furnished with all kinds of foreign fineries and foreign

[1] Actually 1921; *vide* Vol. XXI, pp. 182-3.

things, your houses containing many things for which in this holy land of ours there should be no room whatsoever I told you at the outset that I had felt both glad and sad. I tell you that I have felt oppressed with this inordinate furniture. There is, in the midst of this furniture, hardly any room to sit or to breathe free. Some of your pictures are hideous and not worth looking at. I recall the many signs and the many descriptions of the simplicity of even the rich men in the time of the *Mahabharata*. Let us not wear our wealth so loudly as we seem to be doing here. This temperate atmosphere and climate of our country really does not admit of this lavish display of all these things. It obstructs the free flow of pure air and it harbours dust and so many million germs that float in the air. If you give me a contract for furnishing all these palaces of Chettinad I would furnish them with one-tenth of the money but give you a much better accommodation and comfort than you enjoy today and procure for myself a certificate from the artists of India that I had furnished your houses in a much more artistic fashion than you have done.

I say also that all these palaces are really built anyhow without any sense of co-operation amongst yourselves and any sense of social effect and social welfare. If you will but form a union of Chettis for the common welfare and for the welfare of the peasantry that is living in your midst you can really make Chettinad a fairyland that would attract all the people of India who would come, see and be satisfied with the ordinary life that you would be then leading. So much for the external part of your life.

I want to plead also for internal purity. I have the good fortune of enjoying the confidence of many moneyed friends and I have the information and I guess also that you, the moneyed Chettis, are not free from the weaknesses common to the men of wealth all through the world. But it need not be so. We have the celebrated instance of Janaka, the King rolling in riches and yet he was the incarnation of purity. I therefore plead for personal purity of life. It is really the element of manly life. Manliness for man is to regard every woman as his sister, mother or daughter according to her age, except his own wife. I want, therefore, fellow Chettis, to be as strict as it is humanly possible with themselves and conduct rigorous self-examination.

Let your charities be also wise. I understand that you spend lavishly on building temples. It is no doubt a good thing to build some temples but the building of temples could easily be overdone. It is a horrible superstition to think that, because we have

built a building which we call a temple, God necessarily resides in it. I tell you I know many temples in India in which God no more resides than in a brothel. Some good friends like yourselves have given me some money to build temples for the so-called untouchables. I have refused to spend that money in building a single temple for which I cannot get a holy man and for whose work I cannot get honest trustees.

The greatest charity at the present moment that I can conceive for any Indian to do is undoubtedly to promote this khadi work.

Our rich friends are fond of giving free dinners to the so-called poor people. I have often questioned the virtue of giving these dinners. The *Bhagavad Gita* says that that gift only is a good gift which is given to a worthy man.[1] Therefore it would be right to feed the blind, the maimed and those who somehow or other cannot work for a living. But I make bold to say that if all of you conspired together and set apart a fixed sum for feeding 50,000 men in the villages of India free of charge it would be a great sin. The man who has got good arms and good legs and honest work in front of him is not a man in need of free dinner. The greatest need of India is work for the starving villagers in their own homes; and I tell you that every rupee that you give for the promotion of khadi means 16 meals to 16 women after they have worked for those meals.

Almost equally great is the charity in connection with the criminal waste that is going on of cattle life in India. And he who conducts a good dairy and a good tannery saves several hundred cattle. So if you will make Chettinad an ideal place for you to live in and every people like myself to come and pass a weary day, I would expect not only to make Chettinad a model of sanitation but I would expect you to have good cattle depots, good warehouses where you will have all kinds of cattle stocked and I would expect you also to show an ideal model dairy which will supply yourselves and the poor people round you with good, nice and pure milk at cheap rates and I would expect you to build tanneries where hides of dead cattle should be secured and turned out into shoes for the rich and the poor. Similarly your charity should flow freely to the so-called untouchables whom all have hitherto trampled under foot.

I may still make further suggestions but I hope I have said enough to give you food for thought. I would ask you, as your

[1] XVII. 20

sincere friend, to think well about the important matters on which I have spoken to you and not to dismiss them out of your consideration and it will give me great joy if I can but find that at least some of you have understood and appreciated my message. I am most anxious to bridge the gulf between the rich people of India and its paupers. I see no way of finding abiding happiness for this land unless there is a living bond created between these two.

The Hindu, 24-9-1927

18. LETTER TO PRAGJI DESAI

Bhadarva Vad 13 [September 23, 1927][1]

BHAISHRI PRAGJI,

I have your letter. I have written to Sastriji about both of you.[2] He has been trying to do something. Be satisfied with what he does or speaks [on your behalf]. I have suggested one argument to him, which may perhaps help. It is that the time-bar should not apply to anyone who seeks entry on the strength of educational qualification. Whatever you do, see that you do nothing of which you need feel ashamed in order to secure the right of residence and do not accept humiliating conditions. Be satisfied with what you can get consistently with your self-respect. It seems both of you have obtained the rights [of residence, etc.,] in Natal. There should not, therefore, be much difficulty in your securing other rights.

Your criticism of Andrews is not right. I see haste and impatience in it. It is impossible that Andrews should tell a lie to you. It may be that. . . 's[3] memory failed him or that Andrews misunderstood. When a man like Andrews is working for our cause with selfless devotion, it does not befit us to be angry with him or find fault with him.

I hope Medh and you are keeping good health. I have been travelling for some time now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5041

[1] The year is inferred from the reference to Pragji's case.
[2] *Vide* "Letter to V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", 22-9-1927.
[3] Illegible

19. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

[*September 23, 1927*][1]

CHI. MANILAL,

I got your letter.

A letter for Pragji is also enclosed. Read it before you send it on to him, so that I may not have to write again to you about him.

I think the words you have used in writing about Andrews are improper. Such words ought not to be used with reference to a worker like him. He has felt so concerned about the cases of Pragji and Medh that he even sent a cable to me about them. How can we attribute motives to him for having said what he felt? How can we criticize him for what he said in Delagoa Bay either? He who serves us may criticize us too, provided he does not let his criticism be exploited by others. In criticizing one's own people, is there anyone who can outdo me? If people blamed me for that, where would I be?

I am on a tour. It seems this whole year will be spent thus. I shall have to return to the Ashram in January to attend Ramdas's marriage. I have no time to write more.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4723

20. SPEECH AT AMARAVATIPUR

September 23, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for the purse that you have just given me and I hope you will excuse me for my ignorance about this place or its people and it was only upon my enquiry just now I came to know that this was the place that supplied national workers in this part of the country.

I have been saying to the rich people of India that if they would establish a living bond between themselves and the starving millions, they cannot do it better than by adopting khadi and the message of the spinning-wheel. You have, therefore, certainly

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

done well in giving me this purse for khadi. And I should like you to give not the least you can but the most you can. And if you have not given the most I suggest to all the rich people of this place that they should put their hands deep into their pockets and give what they properly consider a decent sum. But even though you may give the most you can in the shape of money, I would not consider that to be the best work or the most you can do for khadi.

If you believe in the message of the spinning-wheel then it is easy enough for me to convince you that you cannot do anything even by giving me all your wealth for khadi unless you are prepared to wear khadi; for unless we wear khadi it is perfectly useless to have it manufactured by the poor people. I would, therefore, ask every one of you who has not become yet habitual wearer of khadi to discard the use of all foreign cloth and adopt khadi exclusively for his use. And what I said to men applies to all sisters who are gathered around me.

I suppose as was done in Karaikudi here also you have fed poor people. If you have done so, while I am prepared to admit that it does credit to your heart I do not consider that it has really added any more to your merit. I am sure that many people of India do not want to make poor people beggars and paupers. And so what I said last night I repeat tonight that the best charity that moneyed people can make today is to support khadi organization. A rupee given to khadi means giving honest work to 16 women per day and giving them also one anna each. And if you want to become a self-respecting people you should see that everyone gets honest work and gets an honest pay for the work that he or she does.

And may I repeat what I said last night that rich people need repeatedly to be reminded that after all personal purity of life is the best riches in the world? I know what terrible temptation riches put in the way of men constantly doing evil. I would like you, therefore, to examine, each one of you individually to examine, yourselves and eradicate wherever that evil exists in your breast. Amaravati means literally 'the abode of God'. How I wish you can make your town or your city really the abode of God. You can easily do so if you will be clean both outside and inside. If we honestly think within ourselves each one of us will be able to see that cleanliness like swaraj is really our birthright. The route leading to swaraj is self-control. And self-control means personal cleanliness.

But I have been watching during my stay in Chettinad that so far as outward corporate cleanliness is concerned, it is really

lacking. If you all adopt concerted measures you can make your streets, your tanks and your surroundings spotlessly clean. And I have letters from friends in Chettinad which have told me that the inside also is not particularly clean. That uncleanliness is worse than the one that I see in the streets and ponds here. The outward uncleanliness and insanitation you can really set right in a few days' time if you organize yourselves, have a body of volunteers and workers and put your streets and tanks in a wonderful sanitary condition. The first essential condition of corporate life, that is city life, is that an absolutely clean supply of water is guaranteed to the dwellers of the city and its accommodation made perfectly clean and sweet. When I was on the Nandi Hills I saw that the tank from which drinking water was drawn by the dwellers on those hills was all day long well-guarded against pollution. Bathing tanks must be separate from the tanks that supply drinking water. I know that the inward cleanliness of which I have talked is a more difficult and intricate proposition than the sanitation that I have just talked to you about. But having been in my own days in possession of some amount of money I want to present you with my own recipe of how you can attain comparatively [*sic*] personal cleanliness although you may possess riches. That recipe is nothing original that I am going to give you. It is really a part of our religion and it is this that no matter how much money we have earned we should regard ourselves as trustees holding these moneys for the welfare of all our neighbours. There is a verse which says that he who eats without sacrifice, that is without giving, is a thief.[1] If God gives us power and wealth He gives us the same so that we may use them for the benefit of mankind and not for our selfish carnal purpose.

I would also commend to your attention the question of untouchability. You rich people of Amaravatipur have a warm corner in your heart for those who are miscalled untouchables. It is sinful to call a single human being an untouchable because he is born in particular surroundings. Give them therefore wealth as if they are your own kith and kin, as really they are, and spend your riches for their well-being.

I would beseech you not to dismiss what I have told you this evening but treasure them and translate into practice whatever you are capable of. May God bless you!

The Hindu, 26-9-1927

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, III. 12

21. MESSAGE TO EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE, TRICHINOPOLY

[Before *September 24, 1927*][1]

I wish the teachers will exercise the great power that they have over the youth of the country for the purpose of binding them to the starving millions by inducing them at least to use nothing but pure khaddar for their dress, but this they will not succeed in doing unless they set an example themselves.

The Hindu, 26-9-1927

22. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, KARAIKUDI

September 24, 1927

DEAR SISTERS,

It is a great pleasure to me to be able to see you this morning and I thank you for the purse that you have given me for *Daridranarayana*. But I am not sure whether all of you really know why you have given me this money. I am afraid some of you think that this money is being given to some rightful Mahatma for his own treasure. But if such is the belief entertained by any single one of you, I want to disabuse you of that belief. You have given this money for the sake of your own starving sisters and I am a humble instrument for carrying this gift of yours to these poor sisters, not in the manner in which you often fling money in the faces of the poor people. This money is not to be given to those poor sisters by way of charity but the money is to be given to them for the work they do. And they are starving not because there is no food in their village but because they have got no work for which they could get money and for such money they could get food. These poor sisters of yours and mine are without work for nearly six months in the year, because of your sins and my sins. If you and I do not eat *arisi*[2] that our agriculturists grow in this part of the country, what do you think will happen to those agriculturists? If instead of eating the *arisi* that they grow we were to eat wheat that grows in Australia and is imported from

[1] The Trichinopoly District Educational Conference and the 37th annual meeting of the District Teachers' Guild was held on 24-9-1927.

[2] Rice

Australia, what do you think will happen to those agriculturists? They will cease to grow *arisi* and starve because there is no money to be had for the produce of their labour. Now these millions of sisters of ours at one time spun yarn like this and it was woven into cloth that we used to wear and which we now call khaddar. That was the time when we wore khadi. Then came a time in the history of our unfortunate country when you and I and our ancestors went mad and sinned. They and we began to be deceived by all the foreign fineries that came from England, Paris and other parts of the world. And so these sisters finding no market for the products of their labour threw away their spinning-wheels and there was no other work to get in their villages. And so not having any work to replace this, they began to starve. Some very few of them left their villages and sold themselves to a life of shame. And remember that these were your sisters and my sisters. Some others went to towns and accepted factory labour for wages which you will not accept. Now you have given this money by way of some penance for the sin of ours. But this money is perfectly useless if you yourselves will not wear khadi. And so what I ask you all is to consider your own dharma and henceforth make a sacred resolve that for the sake of these poor sisters you will wear nothing but khadi. But then khadi needs something more than merely wearing cloth spun and woven by the sacred hands of these villagers. If you will, through this khadi, think of these poor sisters with a true heart, then khadi will be a symbol not only of your outward change but the whole heart will be changed. If you do that you will again revive the age of Sati and Sita. And that is what I am incessantly praying God to make you like. But even God cannot make us what we should be, against our own wills. God only helps those who are willing to help themselves and He is only waiting to make every one of you like Sita if you would only wish to become like Sita; but you don't wish it because you really consider that there are some people who are even untouchables to you; not so did Sita act. On the contrary, she regarded Guha as Nishadaraja[1] whom in our ignorance today we consider as untouchable. But if you will wear khadi in the khadi spirit, then you will not consider a single human being to be untouchable because he is born in particular surroundings.

Now you will even perhaps understand why I consider that you, the rich women of Chettinad, have not given for *Daridranarayana* anything like enough money. I do not hesitate to ask

[1] King of the Nishadas, a tribe in the Vindhya mountains

sisters like you not only to give me money which really they got from their parents and husbands but I ask them to part with their *streedhanam* or their jewels. And I ask them to part with it on this condition that they should not again ask that the jewellery should be replaced. The real beauty of woman does not consist in her fine saris, in her diamonds and gold jewellery. Woman's real beauty for that matter consists in the possession of a pure heart. May God give you that heart!

The Hindu, 26-9-1927

23. SPEECH IN REPLY TO ADDRESSES, DEVAKOTTAH

September 24, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for all the addresses[1], and I thank the expert spinner, Sjt. Chokkalingam Chettiar, for presenting me with a specimen of cotton as it goes through all the different processes before it is turned out into yarn. I thank him also for giving me khadi prepared out of yarn of his own spinning and woven in this place by a weaver and I have exposed that. This beautifully fine khadi is for you to see and I have no doubt that through this khadi you can also see my face. I want to commence the proceedings of this meeting with an offer to you. This khadi I cannot wear for the simple reason that it would be against my profession that I want to have no more than any of the starving millions. God alone knows how far I permit myself all kinds of latitude under cover of my intense desire to do service. But I have not yet developed sufficient insolence in me to say that if I used this beautiful khadi I should be able to serve you more. Therefore unless you accept this sporting offer that I am about to make, this piece of khadi will go among the exhibits that have been collected by the All-India Spinners' Association. And it will be among some of the rare exhibits of the Association, but I would really like you to retain this beautiful piece of workmanship in your midst as an exhibit for yourselves or in order to adorn some of you, rich men. But if you propose to keep it as a trophy in your midst you will have to pay the sportsman's price for it. And to show how much I prize this piece of khadi which is on its way to

[1] The addresses were presented by the citizens, the Devakottah Union Board, and the studentsand the staff of the Nagarathar Sri Minakshi Vidyalaya High School.

approach the *shabnam* of Dacca, I cannot let you have it for anything under Rs. 1,000. *Shabnam* is a beautiful poetic name for Dacca khadi which our forefathers were in the habit of manufacturing there. *Shabnam* means evening dew and this mulmul was so called because someone mistook it for evening dew when it was spread in front of him. It was so fine and so beautiful. A few months ago there died in Bengal one Mr. Chatterjee who produced Dacca mulmul or khadi almost approaching this *shabnam*. Unfortunately for us he died but his workmanship exists and that khadi still remains as an exhibit in the Khadi Pratishthan in Bengal and the manager of the Pratishthan will not part with that khadi even for Rs. 5,000. I admit that these are or may be called fancy prices, but lovers of art, lovers of their country, lovers of patriotism do not mind paying fancy prices for their love. And there I finish this story of my sportsman's offer with which I commenced these proceedings. And in the end of my speech it would be seen whether there is anyone who prizes this beautiful piece of art for the money that I have suggested to you.

Here is also another piece of workmanship presented by my friend Sjt. Srinivasa Iyengar. This also, though not so fine as the preceding piece, is too fine for me to use personally. If you wish to pay a fancy price for it you can treat with me, but I shall not name my own price for fear of putting an undue strain upon your love. This is a finished scarf surely and much better than any silk that you get from Paris. You will forgive me for taking away so much of your time over my praise of two pieces of art. But that also shows to you how I am khadi-mad. When I begin to talk of khadi I can talk about it endlessly if I get patient listeners; for I know that in khadi lies the economic salvation of our starving brethren and sisters scattered in seven hundred thousand villages and I wish that I can induce you to think that life is a burden to you as it is a burden to me so long as there exists in India a single man or woman who starves for want of work. I am passing so many days, precious days, in Chettinad with the high hope of being able to evoke the best of your benevolence on behalf of *Daridranarayana*. I want you therefore to give the most that you can and not the least you have.

And if you have given the most financial assistance that you can, you will not have established a living bond between yourselves and these starving millions unless you will make khadi your own. And you have an ocular demonstration that it is possible for you to have in this very place as fine khadi as you like in order to suit your tastes. What these two friends have been able

to produce, many more can also do if they only strive. I hope therefore that you will, all young and old, men and women, boys and girls, make a sacred resolution that henceforth you will not buy any foreign cloth and that all your purchases will be in khadi, hand-spun and hand-woven. So much for khadi.

But there are other things that I would like to commend to your attention. I venture to suggest to you that you are not using your riches wisely though you seem to be using them profusely. You have erected huge palaces but you have not given any attention to your surroundings. I would like you therefore to ensure the purest supply of the purest water not only for yourselves but all those who are living in your midst. Your roads must be perfectly good. And all your tanks should actually be sweet-smelling, containing nothing but good, clear, sparkling, pure water. Your drainage must be in a perfect state and all these things are really incredibly simple and if you will set your heart upon it you will find that it won't cost you anything that you will feel. If you will do all these things, well, you must get expert advice for all these things. But this requires a little sacrifice of personal inclinations and personal ease. It requires also a desire to live a corporate life—life not merely for self, but for one's own country. It requires also a fellow-feeling for all your neighbours including the poorest. And immediately you have given that bent to your inclination you will find that it will cost little effort and still less money and I assure you that you will be amply repaid for your pains.

But I was astonished this afternoon to learn that you will not even give a proper and decent education to your own children. Your one ambition in life is, I was told, to make them even at a tender age money-making machines. It cannot be right. By all means make them your worthy successors in office but before they embark upon stormy life let them have an idea of our own knowledge in the shape of our own culture, let their character be formed and let them know something of the history and the country of ours. As it is, I am told that you are tossed to and fro by all kinds of texts that are put before you by people parading to know the Shastras in the sacred name of Shastras. But let me tell you that every incantation whether it is in Sanskrit or whether it is in Tamil is not necessarily Shastra. My definition of true Shastra is the chosen word that giveth us life. Therefore any text, however ancient it may be described to be, which takes us along the path of perdition, which is therefore inconsistent with truth or the universal law of life, is not Shastra. And hence have we

been taught that Shastra comes really out of the mouth of people of character whom we describe as holy men, and not every man, who wears red-coloured robe and smears his forehead and the whole of his body with all kinds of marks and rolls out verses after verses from things which he calls scriptures, is a holy man. A holy man is one who never considers himself superior to any single creature on earth and who has renounced all the pleasures of life. But really in this *Kaliyuga*[1] we do not easily come across a holy man. Therefore it becomes doubly our duty to give a proper education to our children so that they may be able to discriminate between good and evil. And you who are rich and past the stage of education, to you I would like to say what I have been saying elsewhere also during these three days, whatever you do, don't spoil your purity of life. I hear all sorts of stories which I hope are largely exaggerated. But I know that generally speaking it is the experience of the world that possession of gold is as a rule inconsistent with the possession of virtue; but though such is the unfortunate experience in the world it is by no means an inexorable law. We have the celebrated instance of Janaka who, although he was rolling in riches and had limitless power, being a great Prince, was still one of the purest men of his age. And even in our own age I can cite from my own personal experience and tell you that I have the good fortune of knowing several moneyed men who do not find it impossible to lead a straight, pure life. What is possible for those few men is surely possible for every one of you. And I wish that my word can find an abiding place in your heart and I know how much good it will do you and society in which you are living.

Now I have to do the same thing that I did at every meeting. Before dispersing, volunteers go out and make collections from those who have not subscribed to the purse or who, after listening to me, come to the conclusion that they have not given enough. If there are any such men and women who believe in khadi, I want to give an opportunity to them to do so.

Whilst these collections were going on, Mahatmaji repeated that offer which he made at the beginning and asked if there were friends who were prepared to pay the reserved price for that piece of khadi if put up for auction. There being no response for this, Mahatmaji said that it would be sent as an exhibit to the All-India Spinners' Association.[2] Mahatmaji, in conclusion, said:

[1] The age of strife, opposed to truth and justice

[2] This was purchased by Shanmugam Chettiar for Rs. 1,001 at Karaikudi the next day.

One word to the students whom I must not forget. They tell me in their address that they proposed henceforth to give greater attention to spinning and those who have not taken up khadi proposed henceforth to take up khadi. I congratulate them on their decision and I pray to God that He will give them strength to follow up their resolution.

The Hindu, 26-9-1927

24. TALK TO YOUNG MEN

[On or before *September 25, 1927*][1]

You are telling me utter falsehoods. You do not know the man.

If Rajagopalachari is capable of telling lies, you must say that I am also capable of telling lies. I do say he is the only possible successor, and I repeat it today. You young men in trying to kill him will kill yourselves. The pamphlet shows how you are fed on lies—you are bringing up your movement on lies which means violence.

You may offer stubborn battle if you like, but build your foundation on truth. I am giving you this time only because I feel for the youth of the country.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

25. A LETTER

[*September 25, 1927*][2]

DEAR FRIEND,

From the facts stated by you and if there are no mitigating circumstances, the case is certainly one for regarding the ceremony as a nullity and leaving the girl free to marry a person of her choice. But in my opinion she may not make any choice before she reaches 21 without consulting her parents.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] This conversation was reported under this date-line.

[2] Copied under this date-line in the source

26. LETTER TO SURENDRA

[*September 25, 1927*][1]

CHI. SURENDRA,

I got your letter. Tell me about all the uncommon experiences you have there. Vasumatibehn did write to me about your listlessness. I was not at all worried though I was certainly surprised.

What is your method of going to the villages? Do you go there alone or with a companion? Have the floods[2] left any impression on the people's mind or is it altogether gone? During the floods all lived in harmony. Does it now seem a dream? Do the people help in the relief work? And those who accept help, are they generally honest?

What is Balkrishna's state? Chhotelal has again gone into silence.

I am quite happy. Though a great many things happen these days which trouble my mind, and some of them make deep wounds indeed, it is a battle which tests the soldier who is a seeker of *moksha*[3] and I have faith, therefore, that the wounds will heal. Even if they do not heal, is it not the promise of the *Gita* that one who falls in this battle meets with nothing but good?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9416

27. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KARAIKUDI

September 25, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for your address and the different purses, the chief purse containing over Rs. 4,000. It is a good purse but not good enough for the people of Chettinad and it is certainly not good enough, when I compared it to the seventeen-rupee purse given to me by the *Adi-Dravida* boys. You can well afford to give four times as much whereas the *Adi-Dravida* boys could

[1] From Mahadev Desai's manuscript Diary
[2] In Gujarat
[3] Deliverance from phenomenal existence

hardly afford to give as much as they have given. Nevertheless I am thankful for whatever you have been able to give for *Daridranarayana* out of a willing heart. I wish to start my remarks by repeating the offer I made yesterday, at last night's meeting. I want to expose to you this beautiful piece of art prepared in your own place, and the yarn of this beautifully fine muslin which I call khadi was spun by Mr. Chokkalingam of this place. I had the pleasure of seeing the very different processes through which he passed his cotton before he could draw his thread so fine as the threads from which this khadi piece is woven. And if you had witnessed his handicraft you would have envied with me and with me you would have also been proud of his art. I cannot make any personal use of so fine a piece of muslin. If therefore I cannot evoke your love of local art and love of the country, I must take this piece away and put it among the exhibits of the All-India Spinners' Association. But I would really like you to possess this piece of cloth. If you will do so, you have to pay a fancy price for it. Works of art all the world over carry always fancy prices and I have fixed the reserve price of this piece of cloth at Rs. 1,000; but you may, if you wish, ask what is the artistic value about this piece of cloth or in other words you may, if you wish, enquire why is it that I value khadi so much as I do. I was told by one who has lived in your midst for years that there are in Chettinad many people who do not understand the message of the spinning-wheel nor do they understand how all these purses are to be utilized. I propose to devote a few sentences by way of explanation of the message of the spinning-wheel. It is designed to provide work for millions of starving men and women who are living in the seven hundred thousand villages of the land. Everyone who knows anything about India has testified that they have no work for nearly six months in the year and apart from the spinning-wheel it is impossible to find work for these millions of people, and so, through the spinning-wheel we can produce sufficient cloth to cover the whole of India. And I venture to suggest that anything produced by the hands of starving millions such as this muslin is necessarily a work of art. All art that is true and living must have some correspondence to the life that we live. True art must not debase life but it must sustain and ennoble life. And now you understand why I prize khadi so much. But it would be valueless if you and I do not wear khadi.

Now I shall tell you something about the organization which is producing khadi and selling it. There are 1,500 villages at

least being served through this organization. In these 1,500 villages over fifty thousand sisters are receiving the benefit of the spinning-wheel and through this spinning-wheel nearly five thousand weavers are weaving the yarn spun by these fifty thousand women. Side by side with these spinners and weavers a class of men has been brought into being who do the special laundry work that is required in connection with the khadi as also dyeing and printing. The whole of the beautiful art of printing and dyeing which had become extinguished in Masulipatam and elsewhere has now been revived and has been given an honourable place. It was through this organization that over seven lakhs of rupees were distributed amongst a network of workers. And if it is of any consequence to you to know, let me inform you that the vast majority of these artisans are non-Brahmins. This organization is being conducted and controlled by a council of nine men, the majority of whom are again non-Brahmins, if you want to know that. Its president is a non-Brahmin who is miscalled Mahatma. (Laughter.) Its treasurer is again a non-Brahmin whose qualities as a treasurer are not to be surpassed by any treasurer on the face of the earth and its secretary is another non-Brahmin, the son of a distinguished banker in Bombay. This organization is finding work for nearly 1,000 middle class men, the majority of whom are again non-Brahmins. It has also some workers who not only get no honorarium whatsoever but actually feed this organization. All the accounts of the central organization as also provincial organizations are periodically audited and those accounts may be inspected by friend and foe, donors or non-donors. No official of the organization gets more than Rs. 175 per month. No man or woman can approach this organization or belong to it unless he or she is dominated by a spirit of self-sacrifice. When I mentioned women, I have pleasure in informing you that there are several distinguished daughters of India who are working for this khadi, free of charge. For instance I may mention the three grand-daughters of the Grand Old Man of India[1] and the distinguished sisters belonging to the great Petit family. The organization is operating with a capital of about 20 lakhs of rupees. But great as these figures may appear to you to be they are nothing when compared with what you and I should want them to be. If the khadi spirit possesses the whole of India we should be serving not 1,500 but 7,00,000 villages and not fifty thousand spinners but one hundred million

[1] Dadabhai Naoroji

spinners. It is for this work that I ask the rich people of Chettinad not to give me some portion of their superfluity but a substantial portion of their substance. You may also now understand that when I put the reserve price Rs. 1,000 upon this beautiful piece of khadi I rather underrate than overrate.

Now I must repeat in a hurried fashion some of the most important local matters about which I have been talking during the last four days of my pleasant stay in your midst. I do urge you to look after your sanitation and your water-supply. Your palaces do not look to advantage at all in the midst of insanitary streets and tanks full of not pure sparkling water but foul water. I can show you how you can do these things at an incredibly small expense, not out of your capital but out of your savings.

I understand that some of your marriage customs are very bad. There is very often a price put upon the head of a bride as much as Rs. 30,000. I understand that you do not hesitate to spend as much as Rs. 50,000 per marriage; but this custom I consider to be immoral. There can be no price put either way in the matter of such a sacred contract as marriage. It must be as easy for a poor man to get a virtuous bride as for a rich man. Merit and mutual love are the sole tests for marriage contracts. The expenses for marriage ceremonies, though I do not consider them to be immoral, I regard them as a criminal waste. It is not becoming of a rich man to dangle his wealth before the multitude in the fashion in which he very often does. The art of amassing riches becomes a degrading and despicable art if it is not accompanied by the nobler art of how to spend wealth usefully. So, out of this marriage reform alone and putting a wise restraint upon your extravagance on these ceremonies, you can turn this Chettinad into a fairyland. You can have if you will, without much effort, public parks, recreation grounds, waterworks and profitable dairies that will give supply of cheap and pure milk to the poor people living in your midst. And as I tell you as a man of experience and as a fellow Chetti that you treble your earning resources if you conserve your health by wise sanitation, by an absolutely pure supply of water and by ensuring pure milk for the rich and the poor.

A lady doctor writing to me tells me that I should remind you about the immoral custom that is prevalent in Chettinad and that prevents you from thinking of these things of public usefulness. She tells me that the rich people of Chettinad had a due share in perpetuating a hideous immoral custom of assigning girls of tender age to a life of shame under the name of religion.

She tells me that there are many *Devadasis*[1] in your midst. If this is true it is really a matter for hanging our heads in shame. Let not possession of wealth be synonymous with degradation, vice and profligacy. And is it not a tragic irony that, in spite of these vices, you are also spending money lavishly in erecting what you flatter yourselves to believe as temples for gods to reside. Not every structure made of brick and mortar labelled temple is necessarily a temple. There are, I am sorry to say, many temples in our midst in this country which are no better than brothels. Do you know that in our religion it is not possible to call any single place a temple unless elaborate ceremonial of purification has been made inside that building and unless the spirit of God has been invoked by men full of piety, so that God may reside in that? And so, I would urge you to restrain yourselves and not lavishly spend in building temples but in the first place dedicate your own bodies to the service of God and for that reason first of all purify by ridding yourselves of the evils to which I have drawn attention. But I am glad to be able to inform you that I received only today a gratifying letter in which whilst the writer admits most of the evils to which I have referred just now he tells me that there are in your midst several noble-minded Chettis rich enough not only in gold but in treasure of virtue also. He tells me that there are in your midst several *brahmacharis*[2] going on with their godly life in a silent manner. He also tells with hope and pride that several young men were conducting against heavy odds a reform movement and I assure these young men that whilst the path of reform is not all roses and that, whilst it is bestrewn with countless thorns, success is theirs if they will persevere prayerfully and with a pure heart. I understood that they are gradually trying to solve one very difficult question that faces every one of you. I understood that a rigid custom has grown up in your midst whereby no Chettiar going either to Burma, Singapore or Ceylon takes his wife with him. I regard this bar sinister against your womanhood as a double drawback and a great sin. It exposes you when you leave homes to avoidable temptations and it deprives your life partners for a number of years of the privilege of your companionship and the opportunity of broadening their outlook by travelling to distant lands with yourselves. I wish these young men therefore very early success in their chivalrous fight and I urge the elders, to whom my voice may reach, to give every assist-

[1] Female dancers attached to a temple; literally, 'maids of God'
[2] Celibates

ance to the young men in their endeavour to carry on the necessary reforms in your midst.

And now that silence prevails in this meeting and as this is perhaps the last meeting in Chettinad that I shall address, I should like to say a few words to the sisters in front of me. I am glad to see so many of you attending this meeting. I am afraid you have no notion that this message of khadi is a message principally devoted to the betterment of the condition of your starving sisters living in thousands of villages. I do not know how much men in India will have to pay for keeping you, the women of India, in darkness about so many things of the highest importance in life, both to men and women. But thanks to God that since the advent of the movement for reviving the spinning-wheel, thousands of women have learnt to come out of their homes and listen to the music of the charkha. And I would love to think that you, the women of Chettinad, had begun to think beyond the threshold of your houses or palaces. I would like you to realize the deep and distressful poverty of millions of your sisters and I would like you independently, apart from your men, to part with your possessions, your rupees and your jewellery for the sake of these sisters and it fills me with gladness to be able to tell you that the response from the women of India has been spontaneous so far as this message is concerned and they have even given their moneys and jewelleries willingly and in many cases lavishly. But to give me money or your jewellery is by no means enough. If you will establish a living bond between yourselves and your starving sisters, it is absolutely necessary for you to discard your foreign fineries and adopt khadi permanently for your wear; because, if you do not wear the products of their labours, all the money that you give for khadi is a waste of effort.

The beauty of a virtuous woman does not consist in the fineness of her dress but in the possession of a pure heart and virtuous life. Millions of men and women all over India early in the morning invoke the blessed and immortal name of Sita in order that her name may surround them during the whole day with her protecting power, not because Sita wore costly jewels but because she bore a heart that was of pure gold and purer diamond. Sita did not remain in her palace when Rama went into banishment but she insisted upon accompanying him through all these eventful years of exile. Sita did not consider Nishadaraja, whom in our ignorance we consider today, to be untouchable but Sita embraced Nishadaraja and accepted with a grateful heart the services he nobly rendered.

And I would like you to imitate Sita's virtues, Sita's humility, Sita's simplicity and Sita's bravery. You should realize that Sita for the protection of her virtues did not need the assistance of Rama, her Lord and master. The chronicler of the history of Sita and Rama tells us that it was the purity of Sita which was her sole shield and protection. And if you will but recognize the power that resides in your breast it is open to you by force of your purity, love and spirit of self-sacrifice to bend the haughty spirit of your men and shame them into forsaking the life of vices and debauchery. I would like you to develop the courage to insist upon accompanying your husbands wherever they go. May God give you that strength and goodwill.

I am now very nearly done and as is usual at all meetings I must follow the custom here also of asking those who have not yet contributed to this purse to do so if they believe in khadi and if they wish it. I would also urge those men and sisters here to give if they wish as much as they can and therefore if there are those who have not really given enough I would like them if they believe in the statistics I have given and in the importance of the message of khadi not to be niggardly but give generously.

[After this,] the auction of the jewels, silver cups and rings, etc., presented to Mahatmaji commenced. . . . Mr Shanmugam Chettiar announced that he was willing to give for the muslin cloth presented to Mahatmaji at Devakottah his (Mahatmaji's) own fancy price of Rs. 1,000. . . . A small ring which was presented to Mahatmaji for a second time worth not even 10 rupees fetched a fancy price of Rs. 135.

Gandhiji became responsive to the mood of the audience exhibited during the course of the auction and was touched by their boundless affection for him and addressed a few words after the auction, a thing unusual. He said:

I shall never forget the scene. This will remain as one of the pleasantest memories in my life. I have had many a pleasant and unpleasant experiences in my life outside and this will remain among the very few pleasant remembrances and especially so because I have been saying ever since I have set my foot in Chettinad many unsavoury things to you. You might have easily misunderstood my word and my motive. But I have seen that the more harsh words I have spoken, the greater the affection you have showered on me. You have received me as a blood brother and taken the words I have said exactly in the spirit I have delivered them to you. That is really my joy. But I would like you not to forget the words that I have spoken to you but I want every word I have said to you to penetrate your hearts and

if I hear that the word having remained in your heart has fructified I think it would give me much greater joy than if you give me millions. I have no use for your money except to serve you with it and it is a strange thing but it is true that I cannot serve you even with your own money if you do not give me your hearts. And so in order that your money which is in my possession may bear ample fruit I request you to do what I have asked you to do. You know that if you can do that, it will do good to you, it will do good to me and also the whole of India. May God bless you and give you the power to understand my message and act up to it.

The Hindu, 27-9-1927

28. MESSAGE TO "NEW INDIA"[1]

KARAIKUDI,
September 26, 1927

In wishing Dr. Annie Besant many happy returns of the day, I can say that my debt to her was first incurred in 1889-90[2]. It has been increased manyfold since. Cruel God has not yet answered my petition for the power to repay that debt.

The Hindu, 29-9-1927

29. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

September 26, 1927

DEAR SATIS BABU,

I have your letter. Mahadev must have written to you about a Pratishthan travelling wheel for a local expert[3]. He spins very fine. He presented me with a piece of his thin muslin almost like Jogesh Babu's. I sold it for Rs. 1,000 to a local Chetti. It is for this expert that you will send the wheel. Please send it carriage paid and debit the whole cost to the A.I.S.A.[4] as per advice from me.

[1] On the occasion of Dr. Annie Besant's birthday

[2] When Gandhiji was introduced to Mrs. Besant through her book *How I Became a Theosophist*; *vide Autobiography*, Pt. I, Ch. XX.

[3] Chokkalingam Chettiar; *vide* "Speech in Reply to Addresses, Devakottah" 24-9-1927.

[4] All-India Spinners' Association

As soon as I get your improved pattern I shall use it and report to you. I am sorry about the Abhoy Ashram. They have not written to me.

I see that Nikhil is not yet out of the wood. I do hope he will be all right.

Have you considered the advisability of creating your stock after Mithubehn's style, doing fancy work on it and selling? Mithubehn has created a good market for her skill on khadi. I hope to do a lot of selling in Ceylon and possibly in Travancore. If you have anything that can go anywhere please send me a box for trial.

With love,

Yours,
BAPU

[PS.]

You are living on Rs. 20 per month. I do not mind if you keep good health.

From a photostat: G.N. 1577

30. LETTER TO HEMAPRABHA DEVI DAS GUPTA

KARAIKUDI,
Ashvin Shukla 1 [September 26, 1927][1]

DEAR SISTER,

Your letter has reached me. How long will you grieve over Anil's death? It does no good, either for the departed soul or for us, to brood over his qualities. Why should we not look at the matter from this angle? Anil's soul is immortal. We were concerned only with his soul, not with his body. Had it been with the body we could have embalmed the corpse and preserved it for years. But we cremated the body upon the soul's departure. In order to realize this and put it into practice, we need no yogi nor anyone else. Yes, we needs must have faith in God and also in the immortality of the soul. Now let us forget Anil's body and try to emulate him.

Nikhil too seems to be a wonderful child. Do not let him overwork his body.

[1] Gandhiji was in Karaikudi on this date.

May God grant you wisdom and peace.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: 1650

31. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Aso Sud 1 [September 26, 1927][1]

SISTERS,

You won't find today's letter boring. I dared not write till now of certain things that were uppermost in my mind. We wrote to each other tactful letters. We wrote to each other as diplomats do, and not as ordinary human beings. Our letters were not real replies to each other, but formal acknowledgments such as we get from the Government.

Today, I wish to write to you about the quarrels that are going on among you in the Ashram. You do not have mutual trust and respect and, there are petty intrigues among you all the time. You and I know of this, but neither dared to write. I thought I must cut through this studied silence. Why is there so much quarrelling among you? What is the cause of this trouble? Who is to blame? Find out the truth. Religion declares that as long as man harbours evil he is impure and unfit to stand before God. So the first duty of any of you who is impure is to confess the fact and thus purge yourselves of the evil. The immediate cause of this enquiry is a casual letter from Manibehn. It seems she had to go on relief work. So she left the Ashram. Now she pours out her distress in a letter. She could not bear to see the disunion prevailing in the Ashram. Please look into this, be watchful and try to bring credit to the Ashram.

If after reading this letter any of you desires to write to me separately, you are welcome to do so.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3668

[1] The year is inferred from the references to relief work and quarrels among the Ashram women.

32. SPEECH AT SIRUVAYAL

September 27, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for this address on palm leaves and this beautiful quantity of yarn and your purse. I need hardly say that the custom of presenting addresses on palm leaves is infinitely superior. You will not expect me to give you a long speech but I expect you to read the speeches that I have been making in Chettinad. But I do want to congratulate you on having this Ashram. I know that if workers in an Ashram are pure, selfless and self-sacrificing, such an Ashram will promote welfare in a variety of ways. I would, therefore, ask you to interest yourselves in its activities and if the activities commend themselves to you, to help it in every way. I understand that the Ashram has a Gurukul where boys are receiving training and that it is also conducting a school for untouchable boys and doing sanitary service in the neighbouring villages and teaching the boys spinning. All these activities are very good. And I consider the work among the untouchables to be the most important of all. It is wrong and sinful to consider any person to be untouchable because he or she is born in a particular state. Untouchable children have every right to receive education and every facility as any other children. I would therefore like you to help this untouchability work as much as it is possible for you to do. Now I see in front of me all these boys who do not appear to be particularly healthy. They ought to receive good, pure milk for their food and they should have open air exercises and they should be weighed from time to time. I see also that their hair is kept low and it is not right. Personally, I am convinced that all our boys should be clean shaven. *Brahmacharis* are not supposed to grow hair. I see that the boys are dressed in khadi which is very good. But every detail about boys has got to be considered by those in charge of them. Teachers take the place of parents for the boys and they are therefore responsible for their good health, for their character and for their mental development. I see some girls also in front of me who are heavily and horribly ornamented. These heavy ear-pendants look not only ugly but they interfere with the proper development of all the features of the face. I wish that you mothers will discard all these ugly superficial ornaments. Remember that

your beauty consists in your character and not in your ornaments or in your dress. You have really no use for these ugly and costly ornaments of yours. Either melt them or sell them and save your moneys or give your ornaments to a man like me for the sake of *Daridranarayana*. You don't even wear khadi. You should all be like Sita with an absolutely pure heart, with simple khadi and with simple ornaments.

The Hindu, 29-9-1927

33. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PAGANERI

September 27, 1927

It delights my heart to see so many sisters attending this meeting, almost the same number as men. As I said at the women's meeting at Karaikudi or elsewhere to the sisters there, the movement for which you have given these purses is essentially a movement for the freedom of the women of India. The full freedom of India will be an impossibility unless your daughters stand side by side with the sons in the battle for freedom and such an association on absolutely equal terms on the part of India's millions of daughters is not possible unless they have a definite consciousness of their own power. Immediately the spinning-wheel is reinstated in all its glory and with all its implications in the millions of cottages of India, woman recognizes her definite power and her place in India's regeneration. For she is then able to say to men, 'you depend for your food and your clothes as much upon us as on yourselves.' 'We,' she may say, 'clean and cook your food, we spin the yarn from which khadi is prepared.' Then she is clothed with dignity which is hers by birthright and of which we, men and traitors of our womanhood, have deprived her. For in our stupidity and in our ignorance we removed from each cottage spinning-wheels and became infatuated with the foreign fineries that came to us from the West and became greedy after the sovereigns and rupees that would dangle before us, and whether by its own design or by an accident, be it however it may, we, men, conspired to keep our daughters and sisters and our wives in utter ignorance and we denied them the education to which they had a right. In our ignorance we gave away our daughters in marriage at an age when they were able only to sit on the lap and play with us as brothers and sisters. By constant usage you yourselves, sisters, who are sitting in front of me, have come to think that it is the most natural thing for you to

give away your daughters early in the so-called marriage and to keep them in dismal ignorance. The message of the spinning-wheel is designed to undo these terrible wrongs. The spinning-wheel gives the status to which a woman is entitled and it quickens the conscience both of men and women and enables man to understand his duty by the women of India. If my word has penetrated the hearts of men and women around me you will immediately understand why I consider these purses from you as not adequate for the purpose for which they are intended. I want you men and women to dismiss me from your minds altogether as a Mahatma dropped on you as a curse from heaven. But I want you to realize in all significance the fact that I come before you as a self-chosen humble servant and representative of *Daridranarayana*. I want you to understand that what you have given me is not given and not to be given to feed my vanity and my ambitions, but to clothe and feed *Daridranarayana* who is knocking every day, in season and out of season, at your doors. I have come to you to wake you up to a sense of duty by the starving millions on whom and on whose labour you and I are living. Even your money, your jewellery, your rings and your necklaces can be of no earthly use to me unless both men and women will wear khadi and nothing but that. This collecting of purses for the spinning-wheel is only a brief and intermediate interval. When every man and woman in India naturally takes to khadi as they all take to the grains that are grown on India's plains there will be as little use for these collections as there is for collection in order to carry on propaganda for cultivating rice and wheat in India. And it is open to you today to shorten that interval as much as you like by adopting khadi, every one of you; and in order to saturate our atmosphere with the spirit of the spinning-wheel, it is necessary for you, all the sisters who are sitting in front of me, to take up the spinning-wheel and if you will, it can become a symbol of your purity and your independence. And it is equally necessary for men to take up the spinning-wheel as a sacrificial rite. I cannot cheapen khadi and I cannot popularize khadi unless I have an army of expert spinners from men who and who alone can penetrate the villages and reinstate the spinning-wheel by giving necessary instruction and by doing the organizing work.

And now let me repeat what I have said in other places in Tamil Nadu about the social reforms which await fulfilment at our hands. Men's lives must become pure. Faithfulness on the part of the husband towards his wife is just as much a sacred obligation as faithfulness on the part of the wife towards her

husband. It is wrong, no matter what authority may be cited from the so-called Shastras, for a man to have more than one wife. It is wrong to sell daughters in marriage. It is a sin to have a child widow in one's house and it is equally sinful to give away a child in marriage or to refuse to call all such contracts or ceremonies as an absolute nullity. And it is wrong also to keep our boys and girls without proper education and it is a heinous crime to regard a single human being as untouchable because he is born in a particular group or family. If we had a true awakening in our midst we would deal with all these social evils and deal also with the insanitation around us.

The Hindu, 29-9-1927

34. TELEGRAM TO MIRABEHN

MADURA,
[*September*] *28*, [*1927*][1]

MIRABAI
CARE HINDI PRACHAR
MADRAS

HOW ARE YOU? MAY GOD MAKE YOU STRONG PHYSICALLY MENTALLY SPIRITUALLY. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5277. Courtesy: Mirabehn

35. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

September 28, 1927

CHI. MIRA[2],

I could not restrain myself from sending you a love message[3] on reaching here. I felt very sad after letting you go. I have been very severe with you but I could not do otherwise. I had to perform an operation and I steadied myself for it.[4] Now let

[1] Gandhiji was in Madura on this date. *Vide* also the succeeding item.

[2] Superscription in this and other letters to Mirabehn is in Devanagari.

[3] *Vide* the preceding item.

[4] The addressee describes the incident as follows: "I could not resist going once to see Bapu before returning to my work. But I had made a big mistake this time. I received a severe scolding and was soon packed off to Sabarmati." *Vide The Spirits' Pilgrimage*, p. 96.

us hope all would go on smoothly and that all the weakness is gone.

I have your two missing letters just now, but of that later. I am writing this against the posting time. You won't worry about me on any account whatsoever.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5278. Courtesy: Mirabehn

36. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MADURA*

September 28, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for your addresses as also for the purses. I thank also the donors of these beautiful hand-spun yarn, and I thank you for the three pieces[1] of hand-spun and hand-woven khadi you do not see exhibited here. They were presented to me this morning and I cannot help mentioning these pieces of khadi also at this juncture. And if time permits and you have the patience you will see these khadi pieces exhibited before you and offered to you also to buy each with a reserve price. The khadi pieces are too artistic, too fine and too long for a self-chosen representative of *Daridranarayana* as I claim to be. I call them very beautiful pieces of art and I would tempt you if you would be tempted to take them from me and keep them as treasures in your beautiful town. At Karaikudi where I got two pieces of khadi[2], home-spun and home-woven, I sold one piece at Rs. 1,001 and the other at Rs. 101. And I mention these things to you in order to tell you that I had entertained much higher hopes of Madura than what Madura has up to now done. It shows that evidently you who could have done much better have not understood the full importance of the message of the spinning-wheel.

I wish to recall to myself and to you the scene that was presented to me in Madura now nearly seven years ago when I came here leaving behind me at Waltair my friend, fellow-worker and comrade, Maulana Mahomed Ali. Times, however, have changed now. That was a time when you and thousands of other people, as I was journeying from Waltair to Madura, noticed his

[1] Presented by T. C. Chellam Iyengar

[2] Gandhiji got these pieces at Devakottah and sold them at Karaikudi.

absence and it brought even tears to many eyes. Today not only does nobody notice his absence or the absence of a Mussalman companion with me but probably you will be surprised if I summed up sufficient courage and audacity to take with me a Mussalman companion. Today the Hindu hand is on the Mussalman throat and the Mussalman hand on the Hindu throat. But I would be false to my God and to my country if in spite of these terribly black clouds overhanging us, I do not repeat in this ancient city of yours my absolute and unchangeable faith in the possibility and necessity of Hindu-Muslim union. I know as certainly as I am sitting here that God will bless all our plans and He is going to bring concord out of this terrible discord. And so, those of you who have the same faith burning in your breasts as I have, I invite you to join with me in sending up a heart-prayer to God to cleanse our hearts and give peace to this thirsting land.

But there is yet another incident that happened during that visit of mine which also I want to recall to ourselves. You will remember that after having passed that memorable night in your midst after due prayer humbly offered to God I made a change, a very small change I admit, but nevertheless for me an important change in order to identify myself more closely with the starving millions. As I was travelling to Madura filled with the vivid scenes that took place at Waltair and asking the thousands of people who met me at the various stations at least to discard foreign cloth and take up khadi, one or more of the poor people remonstrated with me and told me that they had no money to buy khadi with. Though I do not think, so far as I recollect now, that the answers given to me were in every case honest, I nevertheless recognized the force of the remark made by some of these poor people who seemed to me to be in rags. I then discussed with the companions who were with me the propriety of the change I am about to describe to you. I passed a sleepless night then resolving within myself what I should do and asking God to guide me. And I made up my mind from next morning, at least for one year to discard the ordinary vest and long dhoti that I used to wear then and be satisfied with the shortest loin-cloth that it is possible for me to do with.[1] The year has rolled by, but seeing the necessity of the change, the change has persisted. I am quite aware that the change, unless it is a token of the change within, has no value whatsoever. But the more I have

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXI, pp. 225-7.

wandered about India and the more I have pondered over the distressful poverty and pauperism of the millions of villagers scattered throughout seven hundred thousand villages of this ancient land, the more necessary have I felt for one who claims to represent the masses to adopt a change of that character. And if you travelled with me to these villages where you see pauperism in its nakedness, you will recognize with me the necessity of throwing away many of your superfluous pieces of dress.

The Municipal address[1] tells me that in your schools, to an appreciable extent, spinning has been successful. Whilst I congratulate the Municipality upon this achievement I must, to be true to you, tell you that it gives me no satisfaction whatsoever. If the people living in the few cities and towns of India were to realize that their life, their comfort, their very existence depend upon these semi-starved millions, they will not treat khadi and the spinning-wheel as a mere pastime, a thing for patronizing. Remember that India does not sustain her town life from wealth drawn from other countries. It has to depend essentially, being almost entirely an agricultural country, for the building up of her towns purely upon what is received from the villages. And after a careful study of the problem of India's poverty and the various remedies that have been suggested to remedy that poverty even partially, I have not been able to see anything approaching the spinning-wheel in usefulness. And it is, in my humble opinion, the sacred duty of the people within the towns to make some slight return to the villagers for what they are obliged to do for them. In my humble opinion this problem of the ever-deepening poverty of India is much more important than even the very important question of Hindu-Muslim unity and, for these parts of India, the very important question of Brahmin and non-Brahmin controversy. These questions are after all mere ripples on the surface of India's waters. The villages are untouched and unaffected by all these questions. And hence you find me in season and out of season talking about nothing but khadi, dreaming about nothing but the spinning-wheel and refusing to be moved from my purpose by these upheavals that are going on in our land. I wish that I could convince every Brahmin, every non-Brahmin, every Mussalman that whatever opinion he retains about these questions that I have mentioned to you, every one of these owes this elementary duty to these toiling masses.

[1] Gandhiji had earlier received an address from the Municipal Council, Madura, and replied to it at the public meeting.

My Nadar[1] friends in their address tell me that while they believe in the message of the spinning-wheel they have grave doubts about the proper distribution and use of the moneys that are being given to me. They tell me that they have read in a Tamil newspaper that over one lakh of rupees has been lost through maladministration or I do not know what. I really thank them for that reference in their address. And if the organization through which I am working this khadi propaganda and through which these moneys are being used is found wanting and careless about the use of these moneys, I confess that it is useless, it is mischievous, to give a single pie for them. And I am glad that whilst they are in doubt as to the proper distribution of these funds they have refused to contribute to the purse. But I am glad to be able to inform these friends and all of you who are present here that there has been no maladministration of the funds. Remember also that the All-India Spinners' Association came to exist only three years ago. Before that this khadi work was one of the items worked by the ordinary Congress organization. But even so nothing like one lakh of rupees has been lost. There are undoubtedly bad book-debts as there are in any organization. We have to deal with all sorts and conditions of men. And in spite of precautions taken, of securities exacted, some of them prove to be dishonest. And if you expect khadi organization to be cent per cent successful before you will part with a single pie, I am afraid that the organization must close. During my public life of 35 years I have had the honour of controlling and conducting several organizations. But I must confess to you that I have not been able to conduct a single organization without incurring some loss. In the course of nearly twenty years' practice I came in contact with thousands of commercial men as my clients, and I have not met a single one who has not had some bad debts. And it is my conviction that this khadi organization will stand, in comparison with the tallest firm in the world, side by side with it in the matter of management. The organization is operating with a capital of nearly Rs. 2,00,000. It is serving fifteen hundred villages all over India, and it is feeding nearly 50 thousand spinners. And it finds the spinners on an average from one rupee to one and a half per month. And it utilizes only the spare hours of these spinners who have no other occupations during those hours. It finds work for five thousand weavers, dyers and washermen who are necessary for the develop-

[1] A community in Tamil Nadu

ment of this business. The provincial accounts, also the Central accounts, are audited periodically by a public accountant. And these accounts are open to inspection by donors and non-donors, by friends and critics. And so if you are satisfied that the cause is good and those who are handling the cause are trustworthy and reliable men, I ask you to unloose your purse and give not the least you can but the most you can. And please remember that your donations are not everything. Even your donations, however generous they may be, will be of no use to me unless you are prepared to wear khadi which I must present to you for acceptance, being the product of the labour of these spinners and weavers.

I now come to the students' address and I will refer to it only briefly. The students tell me that they are unable to learn Hindi because they have no time and because they can only regard education in terms of commerce. And so they have apologized for their ignorance of Hindi and for having presented their address to me in English language. Even as khadi has been conceived in terms of the millions so has Hindi been conceived in the interests of these very millions. And I was grieved to find this despondent note in the students' address. It is a bad outlook for any country whose young men lose hope. Students should realize that real education comes not in the college course or the high school premises but it comes outside. All of the successful men in the world, if you were to examine their history, you will find that they really learned the essential things of life outside school premises. And poor as we in India are, I must refuse to accept the proposition that education should be regarded in terms of commerce. Let the student world remember that after all they are a handful, a drop in this ocean of humanity. Let them also remember that thousands upon thousands earn an honest and respectable livelihood although they have never entered a high school or college. Let them also understand that it is hurled as a reproach against the student world that the vast majority of the students when they are discharged from their schools or colleges only look forward to clerkships either under the Government or in some business firm. I regard it as a misuse of education. I admit that the educational system is rotten to the core. But taking things as they are, I have been endeavouring to show to students that it is possible for them to help themselves even in the midst of these adverse circumstances if they only think betimes. And so if I suggest to them that even whilst they go to schools which are being really paid for out of the

taxes received from the millions, and as a matter of fact that immoral source of revenue—excise—they can make some return for the poor by adopting khadi and the spinning-wheel. Similarly when I suggest that if they regard themselves as citizens not only of the Peninsula south of the Vindhya range but citizens of the whole of India and if they want to have a living touch with the people north of the Vindhya range also they must learn Hindi, they retort that the Senate of the Madras University should make Hindi compulsory in all schools and all the colleges. I admit the force of that retort, I admit that it is the duty of the Senate to introduce Hindi as a second language in all the curricula. But I am altogether unable to endorse the proposition that the students should feel resourceless and helpless and, sitting with their hands folded, refuse to learn Hindi unless the Senate has made this necessary reform. You have here a Hindi Prachar Office in Madura. It is open to any one of you to learn Hindi and you will find that it is incredibly easy to learn if you will only give one hour per day. And some of you will even discover that just as English has a commercial value so also Hindi has a commercial value in this land if you will use your education for commerce. But I understand that even the Hindi Office you are not able to make self-supporting. I draw the attention of the Municipality and of the citizens of Madura to this defect. Surely it is an activity for which it must not be difficult for you to find a few hundred rupees per year.

I must now hurry on to the other problems which are facing this country. I congratulate the Municipality upon its being able to tell me that so far as its schools and its offices are concerned there is no such thing as untouchability. And I am glad to note that you have a few thousand *Adi-Dravida* boys and a few hundred *Adi-Dravida* girls learning in your schools. But may I also suggest that it is possible for the Municipality to do much more for them? Have you provided them with decent quarters? Are you looking after their homes and their habits which because of our criminal neglect have grown round them? Are you trying to wean them from the drink curse? And I would like here to repeat what I have been saying throughout this Tamil Nad tour that it is necessary for us all, whether we are Brahmins, non-Brahmins and what not, to think of the child-wife and the child-widow. I have received some letters urging me to reconsider my views about child-widows, so far as South India is concerned. I have seen no reason to reconsider my opinion. And I consider that we, thinking men and thinking women, can-

not sit still so long as there is a single child-widow to shame us. It is equally necessary for those who are leaders of public opinion to drive out this wretched, immoral *Devadasi* institution. Let us not insult our religious sense by covering this crime under the name of religion.

The Hindu, 30-9-1927

37. *THE NEILL STATUE AND NON-VIOLENCE*

A Gujarati friend thus remonstrates in a letter to a common friend:

> Sometimes Bapu's non-violence baffles one. He encourages the agitation for the removal of the Neill statue as he encouraged the one for the removal of the Lawrence statue. To me it looks very much like violence; for the agitation must beget hatred against Englishmen—the very thing Bapu wants to avoid. And where I can see no violence he sees it, as in carrying arms for removing the Arms Act. It appears to me that in the first case there is every risk of violent temper being begotten by apparently non-violent means. And this according to Bapu should be avoided. In the second case only a slight risk or possibility of violence is incurred in order to achieve a worthy end—just the thing I should have imagined Bapu would brave.

In order to do justice to the argument and make it easily intelligible to the reader, I have somewhat extended the argument put cryptically in the original Gujarati.

Non-violence is made of sterner stuff. There is no doubt that the agitation for removing the Neill statue and the like is likely to increase the feeling of hatred against the English. A reformer seeking to spread non-violence must take note of the fact and guard against hatred, but dare not on any account hush causes of hatred. Non-violence in the form of love is the activest force in the world. As the Gujarati poet Shamal says, "There is no merit in returning good for good; most men do this. Merit lies in returning good for evil." Merit here stands obviously for non-violence. Causes of hatred everywhere obtrude themselves on one's gaze. The seers of old saw that the only way of dealing with the situation was to neutralize hatred by love. This force of love therefore truly comes into play only when it meets with causes of hatred. True non-violence does not ignore or blind itself to causes of hatred, but in spite of the knowledge of their existence

operates upon the person setting these causes in motion. Were it otherwise, the fight for swaraj by non-violent means would be an impossibility. For at every step the Swarajist is bound to expose to view the blemishes of foreign rule and the foreign rulers. The law of non-violence—returning good for evil, loving one's enemy—involves a knowledge of the blemishes of the 'enemy'. Hence do the scriptures say: "क्षमा वीरस्य भूषणम् ।"—"Forgiveness is an attribute of the brave."

It is perhaps now clear why a believer in non-violence must endorse any non-violent agitation for the removal of the Neill statue and the like. But the carrying of arms is not permissible for a non-violent man, for he is expected not to use them. And the total removal of the Arms Act in my opinion will never be held to be a just cause. Hence carrying arms for the removal of the Arms Act can never fall under any scheme of non-violence.

It is now perhaps necessary to look a little closer into the Neill statue agitation. Here is the inscription on the front side of the pedestal of the statue:

James George Smith Neill
A. D. C. to the Queen
Lieut.-Colonel of the Madras Fusiliers
Brigadier General in India
A brave, resolute, self-reliant soldier
Universally acknowledged as the first
Who stemmed the torrent of rebellion in Bengal.
He fell gloriously
At the relief of Lucknow
25th September 1857
Aged 47.

The inscription at the back reads:

Erected by public subscription, 1860

I venture to suggest that these are untruthful statements. The inscription is false history. At the time of writing this article I have not by me Kaye and Malleson's volumes, but a friend has obliged me by procuring for me Thomson's illuminating monograph *The Other Side of the Medal*. It shows how false history is taught to us in schools and colleges. I take the following extracts from that book:

These were General Neill's instructions to Major Renaud when he was hurrying with an advance guard to the relief of Cawnpore;

"Certain guilty villages were marked out for destruction, and all the men inhabiting them were to be slaughtered. All sepoys of mutinous regiments not giving a good account of themselves were to be hanged. The town of Futtehpore, which had revolted, had to be attacked, and the Pathan quarters destroyed with all their inhabitants. All heads of insurgents, particularly at Futtehpore, to be hanged. If the Deputy Collector is taken, hang him, and have his head cut off and stuck up on one of the principal (Mahommedan) buildings of the town."

According to Kaye:

Again, apart from Neill's doings, and certainly when a Major was sent on by Neill towards Cawnpore, there is no doubt that people were put to death in the most reckless manner. And afterwards Neill did things almost more than the massacre, putting to death with deliberate torture, in a way that has never been proved against the natives.

Sir George Campbell says: Neill is one of those people who have been elevated into a hero on the strength of a feminine sort of violence, and whose death much disarmed criticism at the time; but now that has passed into old history, I may say that, so far as I could learn from the most impartial sources, there was not much more in him. . . . I can never forgive Neill for his very bloody work and especially for his share in the mismanagement which caused the loss of the regiment of Loodiana. At Allahabad, by violence and mistrustful usage, he all but turned against us the Ferozepore regiment (only second to the men of Loodiana in my affection) which afterwards did such splendid service.

There is much more than can be quoted to show the true character of the "hero" in whose honour the statue was erected by "public subscription". Statues like these are a portent. They are an eloquent proof of what the British Government finally stands for—terrorism and falsehood. These are strong expressions, but they are as true as they are strong. Hence is it the duty of every Indian, every true Englishman, to oppose this terrorism and falsehood with all his might. But the way to oppose these with all one's might lies not through retaliation, responsive terrorism and falsehood, but by the exact opposite of the twins, that is to say, by meeting terrorism with non-violence and falsehood with truth. It may be a difficult way, but it is the only way if India and the world are to live. If therefore the young men who have launched upon the battle will follow it up honestly and non-violently, they deserve all sympathy, and it is well that the local Congress Committee has taken up the matter in earnest.

Young India, 29-9-1927

38. COW-SACRIFICE IN VEDAS

In *Young India* for June 2, was published an article by Sjt. C. V. Vaidya making valuable suggestions about saving the cow and her progeny. But in that article the learned writer gave his opinion that sacrificial cow-slaughter and beef-eating were prevalent in the Vedic age. Pandit Satavalekar sent me in Hindi a refutation of Sjt. Vaidya's statement about cow-sacrifice and beef-eating in Vedic times. As my purpose was merely to elucidate truth and not to have a newspaper controversy, I forwarded the article to Sjt. Vaidya. He promptly and courteously sent me his reply. I submitted it to Pandit Satavalekar who sent his rejoinder. I now give below the translations[1] by Mahadev Desai of Pandit Satavalekar's writings and the reply of Sjt. Vaidya in the original. Pandit Satavalekar has in two numbers of his *Vaidika Dharma* given a more detailed and exhaustive argument supported by copious extracts from the Vedas in support of his opinion. I refer the curious to these valuable articles. As a layman not knowing the original, I follow the excellent rule that when there is the slightest doubt, it is best to lean on the right side, the right side in this case being the belief that those who gave us the Vedas were not guilty of what appears to our age to be the crime of killing cows for sacrifice or food. The discussion has otherwise no bearing on the present age, because the veneration of the cow is too deeply embedded in the Hindu bosom to be affected by any opinion, however authoritative it may be, in favour of cow-sacrifice and beef-eating in the Vedic age. It has however more than an academic value for those who incline to the belief that whatever was done during those ancient times should be revived in this age by every legitimate effort. These may study Pandit Satavalekar's article referred to by me and Sjt. Vaidya's published writings which are available as well in English as in Marathi and Hindi.

Young India, 29-9-1927

[1] Not reproduced here

39. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

[*September 29, 1927*][1]

CHI. MIRA,

This is merely to tell you I can't dismiss you from my mind. Every surgeon has soothing ointment after a severe operation. This is my ointment.

Tell Ramdas I have just got his letter. He must quickly recover.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5279. Courtesy: Mirabehn

40. SPEECH AT SAURASHTRA CLUB, MADURA[2]

September 29, 1927

I thank you for your beautiful address and your purse. In all my tours I do not remember having used the adjective 'beautiful' in connection with any address that I have hitherto received. I called your address beautiful for a reason which perhaps you have not guessed. I called it beautiful because you have given me the original which is written in your dialect which is a mixture of Gujarati and Marathi showing that you have not forgotten your antecedents. Not that I am myself in love indiscriminately with all antecedents. Where they are bad, immoral, injurious, it is our duty to destroy and forget them. But this one of not giving up one's language or dialect is never a bad thing. And after all, the great Marathi language and Gujarati, these are today living tongues used by men who are leaving their mark on the history of our country. And I am glad also that you are keeping up the Devanagari script.

And therefore it gave me additional pleasure to understand from your address that in your High School, which is very well attended, Hindi has been made an optional language. As I refuse

[1] From the postmark

[2] Extracts from this speech were also published in *Young India*, 13-10-1927, under the title "The Fallacy of Handloom Weaving".

to recognize any barrier between the North and the South or the East and the West, I undoubtedly appreciate and like the idea of your all knowing Tamil. But that should be an additional accomplishment, an additional grace, not at the sacrifice of Hindi. I wish therefore that your committee may make up its mind to make Hindi compulsory in your High School. And as I expect you to know the value of Hindi more than our brethren in the South, I would like you to specialize in Hindi and finance the Hindi movement that is going on in the town. You are a well-knit, united, energetic, enterprising group of men and women in this town. Therefore this is a responsibility which you can easily shoulder and remove the burden from the people of the North[1] who have hitherto borne the Hindi propaganda in this province.

I am much touched by your reference to your connection to Rajkot, the home of my youth. But please remember that it is a difficult thing to claim such a title, because you have thereby created for yourselves a greater responsibility in connection with every activity of mine in so far as it is commended to your attention. What can be the use of a man having such a large number of kinsmen if he may not fall back upon them in the hour of peril. But it is possible for you, if you will, to claim a still closer kinship with me. For, though I am proud of being the son of a father who was the Minister of a State, I am, if it was at all possible, prouder still on having become a fellow-weaver with you. For whilst my father was weaving the destiny of a little State that was placed under his charge for the time being, you and I, if we wish to, can weave the destiny of this great land, the profession which with you is hereditary, but which I have adopted by choice. And in taking that greater pride in reminding you of this kinship I am doing no violence to the memory, the sacred memory of my father because I am following in his footsteps in ministering to the needs of larger classes of people. And this claiming of closer kinship with me brings me to an important paragraph in your address.

You ask me to encourage hand-weaving even through foreign yarn or mill-made yarn inasmuch as, so you say in your address, it is not possible today to find hand-spun yarn of the fineness you require and in the quantity you require. Now I shall tell you as a fellow-weaver why I cannot possibly endorse your recommendation. If I endorse your recommendation I hope to be able to show you that it would be bad for you and bad for the class

[1] The source has "South".

which I have in view and which you also should have in view. You should, keen and shrewd businessmen as some of you are, understand that every weaver who weaves yarn which is supplied by foreign mills or even by mills of India places himself at the disposal of and at the tender mercy of the mills. You as weavers should realize that this weaving, hand-weaving, which you are today controlling to a certain extent, will in time to come slip away from your hands as soon as the mills of the world or the mills of India are ready to weave the pattern that you are today exclusively weaving. Let me inform you if you do not know the fact already that various mill-owners of the world are making experiments in order to weave the pattern which are today your monopoly. It is no fault of the mill-owners that the mill industry is endeavouring day after day to take away the monopolies and take this trade in its own hands. To make continuous improvements in its machinery and to make continuous encroachments upon the handicrafts of the world is really the objective and the ideal of these great industrialists. Indeed, it is the condition of their very existence that they should try to take this trade also from off your hands. What has befallen the industry of spinning will most decidedly befall the industry of hand-weaving also if the weavers do not take a leaf out of my book. Let me inform you, and you don't know this, very few people in India know this fact that I began as you are now doing. I first became a weaver in 1915. I told you that I became first a weaver and then a spinner. I have woven with these very hands, I mean those foreign yarns and our mill yarns. But you will excuse me for claiming to know more than you do the secret of this business. As I was sitting—I can point out the spot where I was sitting—as I was sitting at my hand-loom and weaving this cloth—certainly not half as fine as any of you perhaps weave—but as I was sitting at this loom I was considering for myself where I should be and where thousands and thousands of weavers should be when mills are organized enough to weave this kind of cloth themselves. And as I was thinking of this thing my heart went out to the millions of starving sisters in our villages and I began, as I was weaving, to think of the lot of these sisters. I became sad and disconcerted, and together with my companions I began a diligent search for some spinner who would teach us hand-spinning and I began also to find whether there was a single village where I could find hand-spinning still going on. I knew nothing then of the fact that there were some sisters in the Punjab. But despair was creeping over me. I took shelter under

a brave widow[1] of Gujarat. She was working in the cause of untouchables. I shared this deep sorrow of mine with this great sister. And I charged her to wander from place to place in Gujarat and not rest content till she had got those sisters, who still had the art of hand-spinning in their possession. And it was she who discovered at Bijapur in Gujarat a few Mussalman sisters who were prepared to spin if she would take their yarn from their hands. From that moment began the great revival which is now covering over fifteen hundred villages in India. And it was after this discovery that I decided not to weave a single thread of foreign yarn or mill-spun yarn in the Ashram of which I happened to be in charge.

I place for your consideration yet another important fact. If you will study the history of the hand-weaving movement in India you will discover that at the present moment several thousands of weavers have simply been obliged to abandon their trade. Weavers, all of your own trade, Saurashtras, are today working in Bombay as scavengers. Weavers in the Punjab are some of them hired soldiers and some of them have taken to the butcher's trade. And so you will understand why I cannot possibly endorse your recommendation. That does not mean that you may leave off weaving from today. You do not need encouragement from me. But I venture to suggest to you that it is to your interest not to ask me to mix up this mill-spun yarn weaving together with this movement which I am leading in all humility. And it is equally to your interest to support this movement so that if it becomes stable, prosperous and permanent[2], every one of you would find a respectable living. I therefore suggest to you that if this hand-spinning movement grows apace it is likely that it may be of help to you.

But now in the midst of this disturbance[3] I must not prolong my speech. But I cannot help drawing your attention to the drink evil that I understand is eating the vitals of this community. You must really make a supreme effort to get rid of this evil.

The Hindu, 1-10-1927

[1] Gangabehn Majmudar; *vide An Autobiography*, Pt. V, Ch. XXXIX and XL.

[2] The source has "immovable".

[3] It had started raining.

41. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

September 30, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

The post is just due but the time for posting is also due. I fully expect something from you today. You are not going to think that you may not write more than once a week.

With love,

Yours,
BAPU

For Ramdas[1]

From the original: C.W. 5280. Courtesy: Mirabehn

42. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

[September 30, 1927][2]

CHI. RAMDAS,

You must have recovered now. By all means take Vallabhbhai's permission and go to Amreli.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 5280-2. Courtesy: Mirabehn

43. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, MADURA

September 30, 1927

Mahatmaji began by thanking the ladies for their address and the purse as also the many presents of yarn and other things made to him by several girls and women. He next asked them to learn Hindi which was the language spoken by their sisters in the North.

He asked them to remember that they had given him a purse not for his own use but for the use of millions of their starving sisters. Living in comfort as they were, he was sure they would find it difficult to imagine the dis-

[1] *Vide* the succeeding item.

[2] This letter was written on the back of the above.

tressing poverty of thousands of their sisters, with hardly one meal a day. There were others who had hardly sufficient clothing to cover up their nakedness. He had talked to some of these poor sisters who had no second clothing whatever and had therefore to go on from day to day without bathing. Needless to say they had no jewels or ornaments worth mentioning. They might not have seen or tasted ghee, oil or milk. Millions of them had no work for nearly four months in the year. Perhaps they would not be inclined to believe what all he had said, but he would tell them that many foreigners too had observed these things and written about them. It was for these poor sisters that he had accepted the purse from them. The money was not to be distributed among them as charitable doles but was proposed to be given to them as wages in return for the yarn which they would be asked to spin. They would be supplied with charkha and cotton and the yarn would be purchased from them. He therefore considered the spinning-wheel as the greatest instrument for bettering the condition of their poor sisters. The spinning-wheel would give them a ray of hope and a sense of self-respect. It would be a means of binding together all the many millions of people in India. They should not rest content merely making a donation which would be of no use if they did not wear khaddar. If really they had sympathy with their poor sisters they should wear only khadi, spun and woven by them. It might appear at first sight that it is difficult to discard all foreign cloth but if they tried they would find it very easy of accomplishment. If they would like to be Sita he would advise them to give up rich garments and jewels and take to khadi. But before they parted with any of their jewels he would impose on them one condition, namely, that they should not ask their parents or their husbands to replace them. He said that three or four years ago he was presented by a lady with fifteen thousand rupees worth of jewels. He wanted them not only not to wear too many jewels but to be careful not to place their children in danger. For, he had come to know of an incident which took place some few days ago at Madura in which a respectable gentleman's daughter had been robbed of her jewels by some robbers. He also wanted them to remember that a woman's beauty did not consist in the jewels that she wore but in the possession of a pure heart. They should also teach this truth to their children and train them to build up their character by giving them proper education.

Again he would tell them that it is sinful to regard any single human being as an untouchable simply because he was born in particular surroundings. If they would copy Sita they would find that she did not regard even the king of the Nishadas as untouchable but gladly and gratefully accepted the services rendered by him. He had therefore no hesitation in saying that the evil custom of untouchability must disappear.

Yet another important matter about which he liked to talk to them was early marriages. They must realize that it was a barbarous system to marry

girls at nine, twelve and even thirteen years. He considered such a thing to be immoral too, and urged that no girl should be married or induced to think of marriage before she had attained her sixteenth year. He would even ask them not to heed the Hindu Shastras if they said that girls should be married before puberty. Taking the case of some of the girls under his control he said that though some of them were aged from seventeen to twenty years, the girls had never thought of marriage till then. On the contrary, some of them were having good education and at the present moment some of them were working for the relief of the distressed in the flood-stricken areas in Gujarat. He was also resolved not to think of their marriage until they themselves told him that they wanted to marry. But he would tell them that all these evil customs would disappear if they took to khadi. For the khadi spirit would make them pure and noble. They should not think that any small quantity of yarn spun by them would be a trifle but should remember that every bit of it augmented the country's wealth. In that light he would ask all of them to take to khadi and spin yarn for the sake of *Daridranarayana*.

The Hindu, 3-10-1927

44. SPEECH AT TIRUMANGALAM

September 30, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for your address and the purse given to me. In your address you have said that this place is one of the cotton centres. I note also that in this place there are many poor spinners, and you tell me that if there were sufficient encouragement it would be possible to work nearly 1,000 spindles. This spinning movement is undoubtedly designed to find work for every woman who has leisure hours and who wants to do some work for coppers. You tell me that it is not possible for you to find a market for all these yarns that can be produced by one dozen men. It shows that in your place or in your taluk you do not possess sufficient workers. You ask me to see to it that this place is made a second Tiruppur. But let me tell you that Tiruppur has made itself. It was not I nor any member of the All-India Spinners' Association that has made Tiruppur what it is today. It is true no doubt that the A.I.S.A. came on the scene to reap the fruit of the original workers. This is an essential work that the Union Board can do and should do and if you have in your midst a body of workers there is no reason why all the yarns that have been produced in this place cannot be sold in the market, and if you go forward and do

khadi work, I am sure you cannot find the local market sufficient. The prices of the cloth produced in these parts will be fixed by the A.I.S.A. according to the nature of the cloth woven. I am touring in all these parts of the country not merely for purse collections but to do khadi propaganda work.

I would like the sisters who are sitting here to listen to this part of my speech. This poor country has some millions of men and women idling away their time for four months in the year. Being near the railway line, you are not half as poor as the poorest, on whose behalf I am touring and on whose behalf I am speaking to you this night. And they are so poor that the reports issued by the Government tell us that there are some people who are starving for want of food. I hope you will not make the mistake of thinking that if the railway line was brought near to every village in India the problem of distress will be solved. If you study the history of the railways you will find that this railway system of ours is simply sucking the village and leaves it absolutely dry. Railways, over the world, are necessary and may be prosperous to the people. This country is predominantly an agricultural country and therefore railways are a burden to the village people. If you wear khadi, the product that is produced by the poor villagers, then it will be a return for what we are sucking from them. I ask all the men and women assembled here to discard foreign cloth and use nothing but hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. I take this purse only on one condition, namely, that all of you will use only khadi in future. I would like the sisters who are sitting here to understand that the spinning movement is essentially a woman's movement. To me the spinning-wheel is a symbol of the liberation of Indian womanhood and I would like you therefore to co-operate with me in this effort not merely by giving your money or ornaments but also by wearing khadi. If you do not need spinning for your household work you can do it as a sacrifice. If you do it, it will add to the wealth of the country and the price of khadi also will become low.

The Hindu, 3-10-1927

45. DISCUSSION WITH A. VEDARAMA IYER[1]

[About *September 30, 1927*][2]

I plead guilty to the charge[3], but the Association has been conceived in a different spirit. I shall explain it to you. We may expend thousands of rupees on the starving millions, that is to say, in making spinners of them all, but we may not spend a single pice on employing agencies to promote voluntary spinning. Those who join the Association as voluntary spinners spin as a matter of sacrifice, and a sacrifice that needs external stimulation is no sacrifice at all. I know there are slackers, I know our defaulters' list is heavy, but I shall employ no agency to wake them up. Those who in spite of the apathy around them will continue to perform their sacrifice regularly and offer their quota to the motherland will be the salt of the national movement, and they will survive me and even the movement. But I do not exclude any voluntary agency. For instance, you may try to stimulate your friends as much as you like, in fact it is the duty of every member of the Spinners' Association to increase the membership and to see that every member pays his quota regularly. And for vakils like you, that is, for those who have faith in the cause, it is the easiest thing possible. You can entrust your clerk with the work, ask him to visit every member from time to time, collect their yarn quotas, and remind them if they are in arrears. In South Africa, I got my clerical staff to do most of the Congress work. And that not because I was a freak. Every lawyer if he interests himself in public work has to give his proper share to it. During the war there, for instance, every important lawyer had left his profession to go to the front, and I could almost read the magistrate's anger in his eyes as he saw me still linger on. And I tell you, I found it impossible to continue my practice for sheer shame. I felt that I must also go if I wanted to maintain my status as a lawyer.

Young India, 13-10-1927

[1] & [2] From Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[3] A. Vedarama Iyer had complained that members of the Spinners' Association defaulted in paying their yarn quotas because there was no agency to supervise the payment.

46. TELEGRAM TO C. F. ANDREWS

MADURA,
October 1, 1927

C. F. ANDREWS
BHADRAK

SPINNING ESSAY[1] IS BEST AVAILABLE BUT YOU MUST NOT SEND[2] TILL YOU HAVE READ IT FULLY. WIRE IF HAND COMPLETELY HEALED.

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 12833

47. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 1 [1927][3]

CHI. MIRA,

I had expected something from you yesterday but nothing came. You are not going to be moody at all nor nervous in trying to avoid nervousness. And do not always think what I would like and not like but do what you think is right even though it may turn out to be not as I would have liked. I want you to be strong in body, mind and soul!

You will not make your time-table too rigid without intervals of breathing time.

I should like to know your weight.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5299. Courtesy: Mirabehn

[1] *Hand-spinning and Hand-weaving—An Essay*, by S. V. Puntambekar and N. S. Varadachari; *vide* Vol. XXX, p. 370 and Vol. XXXII, p. 517.

[2] Presumably, to the Viceroy; *vide* letters to Andrews, 1-10-1927 and 11-11-1927.

[3] Inferred from the reference to addressee's nervousness; *vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", 2-10-1927.

48. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

ON TOUR,
MADURA,
October 1, 1927

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have received your letter. This little injury of yours has given me a new meaning of, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." I did unto you about your injury as I would have wished you to do unto me. But I see that I was hopelessly wrong in applying the principle to you. I should have done unto you, not only what I would have wished you to do unto me but I should have done unto you what was needed for you. Your need and not your wish should have been the determining factor. And if I had remembered as I should have done that yours was a very sensitive skin, easily liable to infection and difficult to heal after an injury I would have thoroughly scraped the wound, drawn fresh blood and then dressed it. As it was, I went by my own experience and that of others who had an equally responsive skin, and in doing so committed a great blunder. Thank God that you will come out with only some considerable inconvenience. But I do not know what I would have done with myself if there had been serious blood-poisoning, as there might have been.

Your reply to my telegram sent today, I hope, will relieve me from all anxiety. That telegram also gives you my opinion about the spinning essay. I know nothing better available but I do not consider it to be by any means the best that could have been produced. The writers are capable fellows but their *sadhana*[1] of the question is not, so far as I judge, of the highest. They have done what they considered was their best. But in the debilitating unoriginal atmosphere that reigns supreme in the country just now, no one has the capacity for hard thinking. Sluggishness comes over us after a little effort and then the work becomes shoddy. I have therefore my doubts about the essay giving satisfaction to the Viceroy. And then, it is really written for the Indian reader, and not for an exacting reader like the Viceroy, who has an overburdening load of inherited and ac-

[1] Study and practice

quired pre-conceived notions and prejudices. I have, therefore, suggested to you that you should first of all patiently read it, not as a self-naturalized Indian but as an unsympathetic English critic, taking nothing for granted, wanting proof for everything. And if it gives you no satisfaction you should not send the essay to him at all. I had something prepared for Sir Henry Lawrence too. It has Pyarelal's and Mahadev's brains in it. But even that is not what I should want if I was an unsympathetic critic. But I had to be satisfied with what I could get. I am quite aware that this subject requires ceaseless industry of a patient seeker. But, unfortunately, I have no one whom I can set to that work, and so it languishes. I cannot tell you how this want of solid research taxes me. I do not half disclose my agony but I have unburdened myself to you somewhat as you have obliged me to confess my shame. I know that I ought to have been able to give you satisfaction and straightway send you a first-class unchallengeable and readable essay. Now I have sufficiently prejudiced you against the essay of which I was one of the judges. Read it with this prejudice and tell me what conclusion you have arrived at.

Up to now there is nothing wrong with me. What you read in the newspapers was all false. Every one of these news agencies deserves to be suppressed.

Of course, the light that you saw in Simla was correct. Orissa needed you. But I want you to become a hard taskmaster. If you are taking part in the relief operations you must see whether the accounts are accurately kept. I have seen nothing yet published. And you must also insist upon every worker keeping a log-book, giving an accurate description of his doings from day to day. But what I would like you to do there is not so much immediate relief work but to find a way out of the annual calamity.

You are somewhat hard upon the Congress politics. Surely they have also a place in national evolution. If the Assembly and the Councils have a place, much more has the Congress. And this I am able to say although I have not the slightest sympathy with its present programme or present mode of working that programme. Nevertheless it is a mighty institution—the only all-India institution with an unbroken record of forty years. I shall take little part in its deliberations but I must be present so long as I do not consider it to be an evil in the totality of its activities. Enclosed is my programme.

With love,

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2621

49. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

October 1, 1927

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your letter.

I learn from Jamnalalji's letter that you have returned from Europe with your health impaired. I think it is imperative that you take rest somewhere and recoup it. I can certainly assist you in selecting a diet but for that you must stay with me for some time.

You did well in sending me your views on various matters.

It is not due to non-co-operation that two factions have come into being. The two camps were already there. What has arisen is only a change in form. My faith is firm that we cannot gain any strength except through non-co-operation. The public has been impressed by its miraculous power but has not enough strength yet to practise it. Hindu-Muslim differences are proving another obstruction in its way. I cannot seek any help from the Councils. The members, if so inclined, can help khadi and prohibition. But members can do nothing to remove selfishness, ignorance and indolence. The khadi and allied work is progressing slowly as well as rapidly. It is slow in the sense that we cannot show [quick] results and it is rapid because all that is done is pure and for that reason bound to produce good results.

My thirst for money is unquenchable. For khadi, untouchability and education work I required the minimum sum of Rs. 200,000. The experiment being conducted in dairying demands Rs. 50,000 at present. The Ashram expenses are of course there. The work never stops; but God gives funds after severe trials. I am content with that. Give me as much as you can for whichever work you have faith in.

My touring will continue up to the end of this year. I hope to reach the Ashram by January.

I have written a letter to Malaviyaji regarding the Hindu-Muslim question. In this matter something must be done through proper channels. I see no dharma in what is going on today.[1]

Yours,

MOHANDAS

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6149. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] In the six months preceding, 25 riots were reported; the casualties being approximately 103 persons killed and 1,084 wounded.

50. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 2 [1927][1]

CHI. MIRA,

I have your postcard and the train letter. I have never been so anxious as this time to hear from you. For I sent you away too quickly after a serious operation. But the sending you away was a part of the operation. Poor Anna! He too tells me that you were gloomy and wants me to soothe you. Jamnalalji says I should have kept you with me. Well, you are going to belie their fears and be and keep quite well and cheerful. You haunted me in my sleep last night and were reported by friends to whom you had been sent to be delirious but without any danger. They said, 'You need not be anxious. We are doing all that is humanly possible.' And with this I woke up troubled in mind and prayed that you may be free from all harm. And your letter gave me great joy.

You are not disgraced. There is no watch over you. Chhaganlal and Krishnadas are to be your nurses and comforts. I know that you are going to get over your nervousness. The Hindi incubus is no more to worry you. I do not care if you do not speak a word of Hindi, though you know much by this time. So even there, there is no cause for disappointment. My confidence in your robustness is no doubt shaken but not my love. The robustness will come because you are a true striver.

Surendraji suggests that you should work separately. If that is necessary you will do so. No overstraining whatsoever about anything.

With love,

BAPU

The enclosed to Chh. Joshi.[2]

From the original: C.W. 5281. Courtesy: Mirabehn

[1] Inferred from the reference to Gandhiji's sending away the addressee; *vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", 28-9-1927.

[2] This is not available.

51. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, VIRUDHUNAGAR

October 2, 1927

CHAIRMAN OF THE MUNICIPALITY AND OTHER FRIENDS,

I thank you for all these addresses and your several purses. I appreciated your courtesy in giving up your right of reading all your addresses. One of them, if you had insisted on reading, would have taken probably half an hour. But I have endeavoured to read the translations which you were good enough to give me. At the outset I wish to congratulate you upon the harmonious relations between Hindus and Mussalmans. The existence of a well-managed library in your midst, the opening of a choultry[1], an association for redress of grievances of railway passengers, all these betoken healthy activity in this important centre. I understand that the Nadar friends have this place as their most important centre. I understand also that they are more and more coming forward day by day and taking their proper place in all the important movements that are going on in the country. You tell me that yours is a recently constituted municipality. I do not know that it is necessarily a disadvantage, for being a new municipality you have no heritage of sluggishness or indifference. You can cut out for yourselves a new and original path and if you desire it, you can lead in the matter of sanitation. We have on the Bombay side a very expressive equivalent for municipality in the Gujarati language. And that was a name when it was originally given to ridicule municipal service. It is really a name which exactly fits municipal servants. The literal translation of the word by which we know municipalities in Gujarati is "custodians of conservancy". In my opinion the beginning, the centre and the end of all municipal service consists in conserving the sanitation of the people entrusted to the charge of the municipality. And if I had the powers of an autocrat and was minded to utilize those powers I would immediately disband that municipality which did not receive cent per cent marks in an examination in connection with its conservancy work. If you can but keep your closets absolutely clean, if you can ensure a healthy and pure supply of water and the purest and precious free air and a supply of pure milk for your babies, you

[1] Lodging for pilgrims

are in a position to conserve the health of those who are committed to your care. I know that the fashion is nowadays to give primary education the first place in the work of a municipality. In my opinion it is putting the cart before the horse. Primary education of its children must be undoubtedly an important item in the work of a municipality. But I have not a shadow of doubt that sanitation occupies the foremost place in its programme. There is a very fine Latin proverb which says that healthy mind is possible only in a healthy body. And I hold it to be impossible to give a healthy education to unhealthy children. In fact, sanitation is itself a first-class primary education for men, women and children. And I have given so much to a consideration of the true functions of municipal bodies in the hope that you, a new municipality, might be able to do your work in a satisfactory manner in this direction. And let me give you my assurance based upon personal experience that all these sanitary matters do not require so much money as care, diligence and knowledge.

Closely allied with the matter of sanitation is the question of grievances of railway passengers. There was a time when I had almost qualified myself as an expert in the matter of expressing the grievances of railway passengers and enforcing redress. And having travelled in many parts of the world and understood all that third-class travelling was and having been a regular third-class passenger on almost all railways, I had exceptional opportunity of studying the condition of railway passengers. And whilst I believed then, as I believe even now, that for many things the railway management is criminally guilty in connection with the comfort of third-class passengers, I also came to the conclusion which I retain even now that for equally important matters railway passengers were themselves liable. I am fully aware of the fact that third-class passengers are the most paying customers of the railway and that the first-class passengers are practically a loss to the railways. I know that the Railway Board does not provide enough accommodation for third-class passengers; nor does it ensure primary sanitation on railway stations or in railway carriages for third-class passengers. All these things and many more I could mention if I had the time. They undoubtedly demand attention on the part of a reformer in connection with this matter. But let us turn the searchlight towards ourselves for a few moments. Our own neglect of sanitation in the railway carriages as also on the stations is no less than the negligence of the Railway Board. And I know that when I was organizing

relief parties in connection with third-class railway passengers how difficult it was for me to enlist volunteers for doing the special work of carrying on education amongst the third-class railway passengers about the primary needs of sanitation. Every railway passenger traffic reformer has therefore to extend the activities of municipal boards. On this analogy that charity begins at home, the reformer must first commence with the passengers themselves and patiently and gently inculcate in them habits of personal sanitation and habits of consideration for their fellow-passengers. I suggest to this useful Association that this is a privileged work of which every reformer may be proud. . . .[1]

The Hindu, 4-10-1927

52. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 3, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

This is the second letter I have taken up this morning. The post here has to be despatched at 11 a.m. The first letter[2] was to Devdas who is lying in Dr. Rajan's hospital, having undergone an operation for piles. He is much better now. Such was the report received yesterday.

The common kitchen causes some anxiety. Surendra tells me it is not going on well. If you have the energy and the capacity, you will go into this thing. If you have not, leave it alone. Nothing to strain you. Take only that which taxes your nerves the least.

I am glad you were able to go to Adyar. The aquarium and the other things you mention I have not seen.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W.-5282. Courtesy: Mirabehn

[1] Gandhiji then spoke about khadi.

[2] This is not available.

53. LETTER TO SURENDRA

Silence Day [October 3, 1927][1]

CHI. SURENDRA,

I have your letter. If you have an inner inspiration to go to Baroda or anywhere else and if Chhaganbhai permits it, you may go. From this distance I can say nothing more.

The Ashram can make me neither unhappy nor happy in the future. I believe that its perfection or imperfection is a reflection of my own. I myself am the cause, therefore, of my happiness or unhappiness. If, moreover, this sense of 'I' melts away, there will be neither happiness nor unhappiness. Take these sentences together in trying to understand my meaning.

Only those who regard themselves as inmates of the Ashram are truly so. Prayers are compulsory for such persons and for other inmates who accept them as compulsory. It was only from your letter that I learnt about Balkrishna's leaving. Where has he gone to?

And then you catch colds; well, I don't like this.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9408

54. LETTER TO SURENDRA

[After *October 3, 1927*][2]

CHI. SURENDRA,

I got your letters. Do by all means observe the course of things. If I have any suspicion I will not let it pass. I shall indeed do some cross-examining when we meet. As for investigations you alone can make them. It would be enough if you do not allow yourself to be easily satisfied. Our atonement should be reflected in our work. You must get rid of your colds.

[1] From Mahadev Desai's manuscript Diary

[2] From the reference to the addressee's "colds", *vide* the preceding item.

It does not matter whether you do it by administering copper sulphate or something else.

I should not write more at this time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9415

55. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 4, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I have not omitted to write to you a single day after you left me but this may not reach you the day after the letter of yesterday (Monday) for now that I am going further South the distance between you and me is growing. There is however just a chance of this reaching you the day after yesterday's letter. It is too warm just now to let me write more and I must prepare for the meeting that is presently coming off. Heat notwithstanding, I am keeping quite well. Are you?

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5283. Courtesy: Mirabehn

56. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Silence Day, Aso Sud 8 [*October 4, 1927*][1]

SISTERS,

Your reply to my last letter was what I anticipated even when I wrote it. The first step in self-purification is the admission and eradication of whatever hatred there is in one's heart. As long as we harbour ill will or suspicion against our neighbour and do not strive to get rid of it, we cannot learn our first lessons in love. In the Ashram, we must develop the strength to do at least this much.

Think well over the matter of prayers. I also believe that the seven o'clock meeting should not be given up. You accepted it as your special duty to make your class spiritually effective.

[1] The year is inferred from the reference to quarrels among Ashram women and their attendance at early morning prayer meetings; *vide* "Letter to Ashram Women", 26-9-1927.

For the present I can only suggest that those of you who have the will and the energy to attend the 4 a.m. prayers may do so, without entering into any discussion about it with others, and thereafter to keep up the habit, in spite of every hardship, as long as health permits.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3669

57. LETTER TO VITHALDAS JERAJANI

A[so] Su[d] 8 [October 4, 1927][1]

BHAISHRI VITHALDAS,

I saw your bulletin. You have done well in bringing it out. Now that you have started publishing it, make every effort to keep it up. Do not give more than one column in it to praise of khadi; fill it, rather, with news about khadi. Give news about the progress of khadi in different provinces. This will require the utmost perseverance and a great deal of information. If you can display these, the bulletin can prove to be of inestimable value.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9763

58. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, RAJAPALAYAM

October 4, 1927

Mahatmaji addressed the gathering in Hindi which was translated into Telugu. After thanking them for the address and the purses he said they had given the money for *Daridranarayana*. But while receiving the money he had mingled feelings of joy and sorrow—joy that they had given money for the Khadi Fund and sorrow in seeing that in spite of strenuous work for the last six or seven years for the spread of khadi among them so few of them wore khadi. Mahatmaji could not see any reason why they, Andhra Kshatriya ladies, should adopt *purdah*. If they remained at home, never came out into the public, they would not be able to know what was going on in the world. He wanted them to throw off foreign cloth and wear only khadi. He saw that they were rich people but he would tell them that there were

[1] The source has the entry 4-10-1927, but not in Gandhiji's hand.

thousands of poor sisters who were suffering from want of even one meal per day. To them the charkha could give a livelihood. But then if they, the rich people, did not wear khadi, their poor sisters could not earn anything. He asked them to remember that every man, woman and child of this land had a dharma to fulfil, and that was to wear khadi. They should do their dharma even as Sita Devi did and if all of them tried to act like Sita, he would tell them *Ramarajya* would come into existence. If they could not entertain feelings of sympathy and love for their poor brothers and sisters, of what use was their life to them? Rajapalayam khadi was very fine and an effort was being made to spread khadi work by giving away a hundred charkhas free of cost. He would therefore ask them to wear cloth spun and woven by them. The money they had given would be spent for the production of khadi and also in supplying charkhas to those who wanted them. In conclusion Mahatmaji asked them to give money and jewels for the Khadi Fund, and in doing so he told them it was not ornaments but a pure heart which lent beauty to a woman. He advised them not to load their children with jewels but give them good education and training. He also asked them not to marry their girls before 16 or 17 years of age.

The Hindu, 6-10-1927

59. *SPEECH AT KHADI VASTRALAYA, RAJAPALAYAM*

October 4, 1927

There would be no difficulty in getting the money for this good work.[1] But you should not always be intent on profits. Even when a man invests capital as in a mill for making his own profits and giving huge dividends, some of you perhaps know that for some years he gets no return whatsoever. But I want you to have a higher objective in view than the mill-owners. That is to say, whilst you make it a point not to lose profits on capital you should never wish to make huge profits out of it.[2] Remember, the greatest business concerns in the world do not depend for profits on high rates but extensive business. The Bank of England is the largest financial corporation in the world and the most influential. It has a credit which perhaps no other such corporation possesses and really the history of that corporation reads like a fairy tale. Some of the finest Englishmen have poured their life-blood in

[1] Referring to the proposed amalgamation of three khadi-producing concerns with a total share capital of Rs. 30,000

[2] What follows is from "Weekly Letter", published in *Young India*, 13-10-1927.

order to make that corporation what it is today. And it has acquired amazing confidence, because it has made it a point not to make huge profits on small outlays. Profits it does make, but that is because of its phenomenal outlay. You will therefore, I hope, not make big profits your objective, but have primarily the interests of spinners at heart. You will not quarrel among yourselves and if you develop real union and limit your personal ambition, there is no reason why you should not aspire after a credit even larger than that of the Bank of England. After all the clients of the Bank of England are rich men and big men and their names and accounts can be kept in a fairly large ledger, but there is no ledger big enough to contain the names of your clients. What I have said requires a longer sight, and it may appear to you that I am talking like a visionary. But I tell you I am not. If I can gain the confidence of the people of India I hope to make the A.I.S.A. the largest co-operative society in the world. That time may be far off but I am not going to lose hope. For you nothing more nor less is needed than that you enjoy the credit of all your clients and the people around you. And you will do so if you will not kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. You should make simple and understandable rules about the minimum profit and make them rigid and binding on your Association. I hope you will realize my expectations.

The Hindu, 6-10-1927 and *Young India*, 13-10-1927

60. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, RAJAPALAYAM*

October 4, 1927

I thank you for the addresses and purses and also the yarn received from different places. It has given me great pleasure to be able to come to this very important khadi centre. I had the honour and the pleasure of meeting many spinners at work. Many of them were elderly ladies. Some of them are even seventy years old. I should not at all be surprised if the ages of these ladies were even more than what they said because they could only guess what their ages were. I enquired of them all what their earnings were per month and I was agreeably surprised to find some of them earned over Rs. 4 per month. That is much more than spinners earn in other parts of India. You will not therefore come to the conclusion that here you are paying higher wages to them than elsewhere. The reason is that they are more

industrious, more skilful and are able to give more time to spinning. Unlike other spinners in other parts of India these ladies do their own carding or have their carding done by their relatives. It thus shows you the possibilities there are in the spinning-wheel. And yet I must tell you that these are not spinners who are really the poorest in the country. Some of them even belong to good families. My eyes are rigidly fixed upon those starving millions whose fringe even we have not yet touched. After having seen these sisters I was taken to another meeting of ladies who I was surprised to see were *purdahnashin*[1]. But they were not spinning at all. I understand that it was for the first time in their life that they at all met in an assembly. I do wish that you will tear down this *purdah* and make it possible and convenient for them to meet as often as possible for the common good of all. The contrast between these heavily bedecked ladies and the poor sisters who were spinning was really terrible to contemplate. These *purdahnashin* ladies had altogether too many ornaments and very rich saris. I suggest to all these rich people that real goodness and purity never consist in heavy ornamentation and rich saris. Possession of riches should never be so loudly shown in our lives. Possession of riches is a trust to be discharged in the name of God and for the sake of all poor people. The sign of good breeding consists not in being richly bedecked but in doing works of charity, and works that are of a useful character to society. I had the honour of speaking to these ladies somewhat in this strain. But I know that it is not possible for them to take the first step without the help of their men. I therefore appeal to you to take the message of simplicity amongst the womenfolk. And I know nothing so powerful as khadi in order to simplify our lives. In every rich home where khadi has penetrated, it has revolutionized their lives. Khadi, somehow or other, does not go well with rich ornamentation. Hence have I called khadi a bridge between the rich and the poor. And I do hope that you will so order your lives and the lives of your womenfolk that there is some correspondence between their lives and the lives of the spinners whom I saw and the terrible contrast that today exists between the rich and the poor might be obliterated. After I finished these two meetings I saw the members of the khadi union—some 20 men who have banded together to devote a part of their moneys in order to develop khadi. And I have no doubt that it is a step in the

[1] Observing *purdah*

right direction if the proper khadi spirit is prevalent amongst the members of this union. Everyone who enters into this khadi business must approach it in the spirit of trustees. The welfare of the millions of the spinners must be held predominant over every other thing. In ordinary commerce the maxim is that we look after ourselves and those with whom we trade have to look after themselves. The position in khadi trade is reversed. We, I who make these collections, traders who trade in khadi, organizers who go out to the villages, all of us have to consider ourselves to be the trustees for the welfare of the spinners for whom and whom alone we exist. This I hold to be a condition indispensable for the success of khadi. And even as a trustee deserves his commission so will all those who are engaged in developing khadi find at the end of it that they have not lost anything whatsoever for themselves, but, on the contrary, gained for the spinners and therefore for themselves. It is for this purpose that you have given me all these purses. If considered in that light your purses need not be considered to be too heavy. You can never give too much for *Daridranarayana*. We, those who live in towns, subsist upon the labour of the toiling millions and it is through khadi that we can possibly work out this proposition of making some return to these toiling millions. I therefore tender my congratulations to the gentleman who has presented over hundred spinning-wheels for these *purdahnashin* ladies. For that also is a step in the same direction. And if these well-to-do sisters will work at the spinning-wheel in the spirit of sacrifice, it will bless them and it will bless the poor spinners. And I hope that this place which has already shown possibilities of good khadi work will continue to make progress in this direction.

I may perhaps occupy your time for a while upon a matter which I was discussing with some Nadar friends yesterday at Virudhunagar. They are an enterprising trading community. They are prosperous and they are as charitable as they are prosperous. They have developed some very fine and clean tastes. They are running an extremely well-managed high school where tuition is free for all boys, whether they belong to the Nadar community or any other community. Their temples like their school are open to everybody. They have opened out gardens for the free use of the public. All this is worthy of imitation by all. You may therefore imagine my painful surprise when I was told that these clean living men were debarred from entering temples between Madura and Tinnevelly. I felt ashamed of my Hinduism when I learnt this painful fact. In spite of my three

visits to Madura I was not able to enter the great temple there. After having heard this painful story I felt that it was a blessing that I have never set my foot in that temple. Even as it is, whenever I visit a single temple even out of curiosity I feel a sense of deep humiliation because of my knowledge that that temple would not be open to the so-called untouchables. For my part I see not the slightest difference between a Nayadi[1] and myself. I should not care to enjoy a single right which a Nayadi cannot enjoy. And so as I go down south I delight in describing myself as a Nayadi. But still I have by force of habit come to understand that these so-called untouchables, unseeables and unapproachables cannot enter these so-called temples, though there is not the slightest justification for debarring them from entering into the house of God. But it was impossible for me to understand this senseless territorial prohibition against Nadars. I don't know whether you who are present at this meeting can or cannot do much in this direction. But there is one way in which every one of you can help if you wish to. For this senseless prohibition is after all a symptom of the same corroding disease. It comes really from untouchability and the curse of caste. I draw the sharpest distinction between *varnashrama* and caste. Untouchability I hold to be an unpardonable sin and a great blot upon Hinduism. Caste I hold to be an obstacle to our progress and an arrogant assumption of superiority by one group over another. And untouchability is its extreme bad example. It is really high time that we got rid of the taint of untouchability and the taint of caste. Let us not degrade *varnashrama* by mixing it up with untouchability or with caste. My conception of *varnashrama* has nothing in common with its present distinction of untouchability and caste. *Varna* has nothing to do with superiority or inferiority. *Varna* is the recognition of a definite law that governs human happiness. And it simply means that we must treasure and conserve all the good qualities that we inherit from our ancestors, and that therefore each one should follow the profession of his father so long as the profession is not immoral. And anyone who believes that man is born in order that he might worship his Maker must recognize that he will be able to fulfil his purpose of life if he does not waste his time in finding new professions. You will therefore see that this conception of *varna* has nothing in common with caste. And, therefore, I would ask you to gird up your loins in order to fight this curse of untouchability and caste, and all the influence

[1] A community which was considered 'unapproachable'

that you might have at your command in order to see that every temple is thrown open to all irrespective of caste. In closing our temples against anyone at all we forget that we are making God Himself 'untouchable'.

I must not now take up your time with the other matters which I have dealt with at such meetings during this tour. I propose to do some business with you. I have got some jewellery given to me by those sisters at the meeting. As you know, I have sold such pieces of jewellery at such meetings. For, I can make no personal use of any of these things. Nor can I carry with me heavy frames in which addresses are put. I have really no place even where I can hang them up. And whilst I am moving swiftly from day to day and from place to place it is a great trouble to carry these articles. I would, therefore, appeal to you to relieve me of these articles by bidding for them. I have no doubt that there are many in this meeting who have not contributed to these purses. And I doubt not that there are some who have not contributed enough. If after hearing me you have no doubt about the great value of khadi, the great service that khadi renders to the country, if you are satisfied that you should give not the least but the most you can, then you will please open out your purses.

The Hindu, 6-10-1927

61. LETTER TO SURENDRA

[About *October 4, 1927*][1]

CHI. SURENDRA,

I have your letter. About Sharadabehn it was just a slip of memory. Chi. Maganlal writes that she recovered long ago. I intend to write to her tomorrow.

You should certainly make any change that needs to be done about rising early in the morning; I should certainly not insist on this point. There is no doubt that the first requirement is that everyone keeps good health. Those who naturally wake up at 4 o'clock may do so and the others when the bell strikes.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9413

[1] From the reference to "rising early"; *vide* "Letter to Ashram Women", 4-10-1927.

62. *LETTER TO SURENDRA*

[After *October 4, 1927*][1]

CHI. SURENDRA,

I have your letter. I wrote you a short letter because I have not yet got back my original strength and where a few words would do I don't write more. I have felt not the least disappointment in conveying my consent nor am I angry. When seasoned persons like you, Balkrishna and others desired a change in the prayer timings, I agreed to it, regarding it as my duty not to oppose the move. I agreed to the proposal also because it would have been obstinacy to continue to insist on the 4 o'clock time now that I have become an invalid and it is no more certain when I would be able to reach there.

I might perhaps decide otherwise if I were there in person all hale and hearty. Yet I would not stick to the 4 o'clock time at the risk of my health. The 4 o'clock prayer is nothing immutable; it is not an end but only a means.

I have thoroughly understood your implications. Please take my consent for granted. I am neither disappointed nor disheartened. I have withdrawn my insistence on the 4 o'clock time solely in consideration of the general good. I have explained things in detail to Maganlal. But do question me if you have any more doubts.

I am glad to get the letter from Balkrishna. I shall write to him when I get the time. Also tell Chhotelal that perhaps I may not be able to write to him today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9417

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

63. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

Wednesday [October 5, 1927][1]

CHI. MIRA,

I suppose it is because I am fast moving away from Madras that your letters have not overtaken me. I expect a haul tomorrow. This is just to tell you that I am thinking of you.

Love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5298. Courtesy: Mirabehn

64. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KOILPATTI

October 5, 1927

Mahatmaji acknowledging all the welcome addresses and the purses expressed his thanks and said that he would auction what he received here at this place itself, at the close of the meeting, as he did in all other places. For, he did not wish to keep such things with him and further it was a difficult task for him to carry them from place to place. The people of this locality might easily have them by purchasing them at the auction, and the amount they thus paid would be utilized for the relief of the poor and the service of *Daridranarayana*.

Referring to the point stated in one of the addresses that the relationship between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins in South India was becoming as much strained as that between the Hindus and Muslims in Northern India, Mahatmaji said that he had been trying to understand this problem and that he spared as much leisure as he could to the leaders of non-Brahmin movement to discuss the matter with him. He thought that by this time, he had understood the problem and he would try to eradicate the difference between these two communities and establish friendly relations between them by writing about this question in *Young India*.[2] More than that he would not do. For, he was not confident that the leaders of either community would act up to his advice. The leaders of both communities should meet together to discuss the

[1] The addressee, in her collection, has placed the letter at the end of 1927. During the first week of October, 1927, Gandhiji wrote to Mirabehn every day. There is a gap on the 5th which was a Wednesday. The contents connect this letter to those of the 4th and 6th of October 1927.

[2] *Vide* "*Varnashrama* and its Distortion", 17-11-1927.

points of difference and sincerely try to effect a reconciliation between them. The allegations of non-Brahmins against Brahmins were sometimes just. But sometimes they exaggerated the matter. He would accept all their reasonable statements. But he did not like the unreasonable hatred of Brahmins prevalent among non-Brahmins. He would concur with the non-Brahmins in their statement that the Brahmins were not doing their duties properly. But he could not accept the statement of the non-Brahmin leaders that the Brahmins had created all the evils. He was also not confident that the Brahmins would, on his advice, be willing to lose their ancient rights. But he would tell them that the struggle was quite unfair and was against the interests of their country. Above all he would urge upon the leaders of both communities to effect a fair and honest compromise among themselves. He would publish his opinions in *Young India* and he did not care as to their acceptance or rejection by others. . . .[1]

The Hindu, 8-10-1927

65. 'AN INDIGNANT PROTEST'

The head master of a Bengali school writes:[2]

> Your advice and utterances to students at Madras[3], asking them to marry widowed girls only, have horrified us. . . .
>
> This kind of advice will tend to destroy the tendency of the widows to observe lifelong *brahmacharya*. . . Your theory of marriage will overturn the Hindu theory of transmigration, rebirth and even *mukti*[4], and will bring down Hindu society on the same level with other societies which we do not like. . . . Examples of Ahalyabai, Rani Bhavani, Behula, Sita, Savitri, Damayanti will guide the Hindu society and we must direct it according to their ideals. . . .

This indignant protest leaves me unconverted and unrepentant. My advice will not wean from her purpose a single widow who has a will of her own and who knows *brahmacharya* and is bent upon observing it. But if the advice is followed, it will certainly bring great relief to those girls of tender age who know not the meaning of marriage when they were put through the ceremony. The use of the term 'widow' in their connection is a violent abuse of a name with sacred associations. It is precisely for

[1] Gandhiji then spoke on khadi and untouchability.

[2] Only extracts are reproduced.

[3] *Vide* Vol. XXXIV, pp. 479-84.

[4] Deliverance from phenomenal existence

the very object that my correspondent has in view that I advise the youth of the country to marry these so-called widows or not at all. The sacredness of the institution can be preserved only when it is purged of the curse of child widowhood.

The statement that the widows attain *moksha* if they observe *brahmacharya* has no foundation whatsoever in experience. More things are necessary than mere *brahmacharya* for the attainment of the final bliss. And *brahmacharya* that is superimposed carries no merit with it, and often gives rise to secret vice that saps the morals of the society in which that vice exists. Let the correspondent know that I am writing from personal observation.

I should be glad indeed if my advice results in elementary justice being done to the maiden widows, and if for that reason the other maidens instead of being prematurely sold to man's lust are given an opportunity of waiting for maturity in age and wisdom.

I have no theory of marriage that is inconsistent with a belief in transmigration, rebirth or *mukti*. The reader should know that millions of Hindus whom we arrogantly describe as belonging to the lower order have no ban on widow remarriage. And I do not see how if remarriage of old widowers does not interfere with that belief, real marriage of girls wrongly described as widows can interfere with that grand belief. I may mention for the edification of the correspondent that transmigration and rebirth are not mere theories with me but facts as patent as the daily rise of the sun. *Mukti* is a fact to realize which I am striving with all my might. And it is the contemplation of *mukti* which has given me a vivid consciousness of the wrong that is being done to these maiden widows. Let us not in our emasculation mention in the same breath as these modern injured maiden widows the immortal names of Sita and others referred to by the correspondent.

Lastly, whilst there is, and very properly, glorification of real widowhood in Hinduism, there is, so far as I am aware, no warrant for the belief that in the Vedic times there was any absolute ban upon remarriage of widows. But my crusade is not against real widowhood. It is against its atrocious caricature. The better way is not to regard as widows at all the girls I have in view and whom every Hindu who has a spark of chivalry in him is bound to relieve from their intolerable yoke. I therefore humbly but emphatically repeat the advice to every young Hindu to refuse to marry any but these maidens miscalled widows.

Young India, 6-10-1927

66. NOTES

A Khadi Lover

Dr. Kailas Nath Katju[1], a distinguished advocate of Allahabad, sent me a letter some time ago referring to several matters, and in that letter avowed his love of khadi and enclosed the first instalment of his contribution to the A.I.S.A. I felt that the part of the letter that concerned khadi should be published by way of encouragement to other moneyed men, especially lawyers. I therefore wrote asking for his permission to publish his letter and incidentally expostulated with him about the foreign black alpaca and endeavoured to explain the value of sacrificial spinning. I am now able to publish below his two letters so far as they relate to khadi:[2]

The lawyers and other professional men may not be able to do much in other respects, but they can all follow Dr. Katju's worthy example by adopting khadi and contributing to the All-India Spinners' Association, which is always in want because of the growing demand for organizing more villages than the Association has on hand. It is not possible to produce an increasing amount of khadi without increasing the capital, and till khadi has become universal in India the expenses of the organization must remain a recurring item.

A Double Sin

A correspondent, who sends his name for my information but adopts the pseudonym of 'A Bachelor', writes with reference to my article "Is It a Marriage?"[3] published some time ago a long letter which I abridge as follows:

> I have read with interest the article in your paper of the 1st instant under the heading "Is It a Marriage?"? Though the names of the parties are omitted it is an open secret to the Gaud Sarasvat Brahmins from Karwar. As a member of the community in which the marriage in question took place I wish to place before the public and the Gaud

[1] 1887-1968; prominent Congress leader; sometime Home Minister, Government of India

[2] Not reproduced here; Katju had promised to send a monthly contribution to the Khadi Fund, spin regularly and use fine black khadi in place of foreign alpaca.

[3] Dated 1-9-1927; *vide* Vol. XXXIV.

Sarasvat Brahmins throughout India in particular the following few lines for their careful consideration:

> It is no doubt a disgrace for a man to buy a girl. But there is another custom among us which is equally bad, for a father among us is obliged to buy a husband for his daughter and the amount received by the husband is called dowry. It is not settled to suit the purse of the parents of girls but it would be according to the hereditary income of the would-be husband or it sometimes depends upon the education he has received. The more a man is educated, the higher the degrees he has received, the more is he worth in the matrimonial market.
>
> A few months back the marriage took place in Bombay of a well-educated gentleman who is a high government official and it is said that a dowry of nearly Rs. 20,000 was presented to him. It is really a pity that the people who receive higher education are going lower and lower by resorting to the very practices they are expected to put down.

I have before me another letter on the subject from a member of the same community. It appears that those who wish to buy wives go to Goa in search, for it is there that poor Sarasvat Brahmins are to be found who are not ashamed to enrich themselves by selling their daughters to persons old enough to be their fathers or grandfathers. Thus the community commits a double sin. An educated young man is open to the highest bidder for his hand, and needy parents are open to negotiate the sale of their daughters, hardly out of their teens, to the oldest men (sometimes educated) who are prepared to pay the highest price. The only consolation that the Sarasvat community may derive, if it wishes to, and if it would postpone a dealing with the reform under some excuse or other, is that there are other 'castes' too that are not free from the same evil. The difference, if any, would be that of degree. But if the Sarasvat community would lead the reform, it will disdain to seek the doubtful refuge of the *tu quoque* and will, now that the evil has been exposed, set about ridding itself of the double sin.

Young India, 6-10-1927

67. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 6, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

This is from Tuticorin. I had expected something from you here. I have news from the Ashram of your safe arrival there. May God bless you.

Love,

BAPU

MIRABEHN
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

From the original: C.W. 5284. Courtesy: Mirabehn

68. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TUTICORIN

October 6, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for all these addresses and purses. I thank also Sarathambal and Saraswati Devi for their bangles. These sisters have anticipated my request to them which I make whenever and wherever I meet them. I thank also the donor of the new and beautiful ring, as also the donors of silver cups. All these and the framed addresses will be presently offered to you for sale. For, by this time all of you know that I do not use all these for my own person, and for the self-styled representative of *Daridranarayana* it will not be right to make any personal use of all these and I make no personal use but I welcome these gifts from you. I have a right to welcome such gifts.

I congratulate you on having a Hindi teacher in your midst and I have learnt with pleasure that not only boys and girls but also grown-up men and women are learning Hindi. But I understand that the expenses of Hindi tuition are not borne by you in their entirety. I think that, if it is so, it is a serious reflection upon your patriotism. As you know, for several years past the people in the north have been financing this Hindi propaganda. But it is high time now that it became self-supporting. Surely it

cannot cost you much money in order to support one Hindi teacher or two teachers among your midst. I may think therefore that you will take all pains to see that you pay for all the tuition he gives.

I congratulate you also on your having a national school in your town and on having named it after Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. It grieves me to hear from your address that you are unable to pay for the expenses of this school. It is something that there is no untouchability in your school, and also that you are teaching Hindi in that school. I do hope that patriotic citizens will look into the affairs of this institution and make it self-supporting. In your address you ask me to set apart a certain portion of the amount of collections here in this town to your school. I am sorry to have to inform you that it will not be possible for me to do so. However willing I may feel it will not be just and honest on my part to deflect even a moiety of the sum earmarked for a definite purpose. I may gladly, however, part with some sum of the collections if some citizens had given me the purse with a distinct request that a certain fraction of it might be given to your school. Even now if there is any citizen so minded to give any sum in that manner, I shall only be too glad to do so. That, however, is not the method by which you can support the institution though it would be something, but it behoves the citizens of Tuticorin to look into the existing state of affairs of this institution and make it absolutely an independent one.

I know from personal experience of several national schools how these institutions are conducted and how beautifully they are serving the national purpose. If you have taken any interest in the distress that has overtaken our countrymen in the north, you will find that the pupils of national institutions in these villages have been rendering great help in reclaiming the area and in relieving their distress to the extent and with the resources that lay in their power. But for the spontaneous and substantial voluntary service done by the pupils of the national schools in Gujarat, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel would not have been able to do what he had done towards the relief of the flood-stricken people. I, therefore, ask the citizens of Tuticorin to keep the institution going.

There is a way for you to get some amount of help from the Khadi Fund. You know that there is the All-India Spinners' Association. If you will induce your pupils to take up hand-spinning and produce yarn you can send the same to the Association which will pay you a decent price and also try to help you in a way.

I have heard people saying that I have made no reference to the Tamil language during my tour in this Province, and to the necessity of learning it. I have even been accused on that account. I am sorry that I cannot endorse that tribute of rebuke. Those who have known me intimately will admit that the rebuke is uncharitable. I have dilated many a time on the need of knowing the Tamil language before learning English and even as early as 1915 I have been asking the people to prefer Tamil to English. Before the year 1917 throughout India ten years ago I carried on a ceaseless agitation for the imparting of instruction to pupils in schools through the medium of the vernacular of the province and asking people to cultivate their vernaculars by speaking in their vernaculars and studying literatures in their respective vernaculars.

You very rightly draw my attention to the treasures that are to be found in *Tirukural*[1]. Let me inform you that some twenty years ago I began to learn Tamil with the desire and object of studying *Tirukural* in original. It has been a matter of deep sorrow to me that God never gave me time to finish studying the Tamil language. I am entirely in favour of the agitation for making the vernaculars as medium of instruction. We ought to learn the Tamil language and prefer it to English and place it above all other languages.

As you know I have mildly rebuked the Reception Committee of a place when they read their address in English instead of in Tamil, the language of their province. I hope, therefore, that you will not accuse me any more in regard to this matter as you know that I am for replacing English by Tamil in all schools and centres.

There is also an address from the fishermen in Tuticorin. They ask me to point a way out of a difficulty that faces them. I am sorry to confess that I have not read the Bill referred to in their address. It is entirely a matter for the local patriots to guide them. Having thus cleared the ground covered by the address, I will now come to my favourite subject that has brought me here. . . .[2]

The Hindu, 8-10-1927

[1] Ancient Tamil classic

[2] Gandhiji then spoke on khadi and untouchability.

69. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TINNEVELLY*

October 7, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for the numerous addresses of welcome and your purses and gifts. I thank you still more for refraining from reading all your addresses. I have had a somewhat taxing day and a still more taxing drive in the midst of terrific din and noise in Tinnevelly and it is late for me also. You can, therefore, now perhaps understand how I value your having waived your right of reading the addresses. You have given me so many gifts, large and small, that it will take some time before I dispose of them all in auction as I usually do at the end of the meeting. I need hardly tell you that I have read all your addresses, the translations of which were furnished to me. I value the assurance given in the address of the Indian Christian Association on behalf of their community that while formerly they might not have identified themselves with national movements, now they are identifying themselves more with these movements. Indeed, I have been watching with very great interest and pleasure this manifestation from Christian friends throughout the south. There is no doubt in my mind that it is as it should be. Acceptance of Christianity or any other faith should never mean denationalization. Nationalism need never be narrow or inconsistent with internationalism. That nationalism, which is based upon pure selfishness and the exploitation of other nations, is indeed an evil. But I cannot conceive of internationalism without a healthy and desirable national spirit.

I was glad to note in that address complete sympathy with the khadi movement. To me, it appears to be monstrous to see the slightest opposition to such an incredibly simple thing as khadi. For, after all, khadi is nothing but a desire to identify oneself with the starving millions of India. He or she, who has the slightest feeling or desire to serve these toiling millions, cannot help beginning with khadi. Only recently did Sir M. Visvesvarayya deplore the fact that millions of people in the villages who have so much time and leisure were sending their raw produce outside India and depriving themselves of the opportunities to help themselves with their own efforts. Indeed, in this part of the country you have an unrivalled opportunity to turn the cotton

you produce to good account. You see here on the table these pieces of khadi whose history I will give you. There is in your midst a gentleman whose name is Mr. Aramvalarthanatham Pillai. He and my kind host, Mr. Vishwanatha Pillai, have conspired to teach boys and girls in two schools simple spinning. And the labours of these boys and girls who are spinning on the *takli* are enough to produce seventeen yards in one month. And I hope that no one in this meeting despises this little production on the part of these boys and girls who have not known till now what it is to produce one yard. This is one of the countries possessing the largest man-power on the face of the earth. This man-power, according to the same high authority I quoted just now, remains unutilized. If all the schools throughout India were engaged only for a short time every day you can imagine the enormous increase in the productive capacity of the country, without any capital or any special skill in technical activity. I have got here nearly 85 yards of khadi all spun and woven here out of your own cotton by your own boys and girls. Here, there is historical cloth for you about which there is as much poetry also. The gentleman has presented me with one piece and asked me to use it and not to auction it at the meeting. I needed no encouragement from him to give him such a promise. As a matter of fact, every piece of cloth that I am using has its own history somewhat like the history of this cloth. It gives me a great joy to be able to know who was the sister or daughter who spun the yarn or whose was the hand that wove the clothes I wear. This is one very vast universal industry in India which not only takes its sweep over millions of our starving countrymen, but is one on which you can build great national activity and unite all the castes and communities of this country.

But these friends, while they have great faith in the future of khadi and its ability to solve to a great extent the deep and distressful poverty of the masses, have little faith now in the solution of the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question in this country. They fear, at least one of them fears, that there is too much of the smell of the Brahmin about the khadi work in the Tamil Nadu. I have been therefore bound by them that whilst I may sell this khadi to you I should not utilize the amount for the khadi work in Tamil Nadu. I have given them that promise, for I need as much money as you can give me for khadi work in other parts of India. But I may inform you, that though there is undoubtedly this smell of the Brahmin in the khadi organization of Tamil Nadu, the large majority of spinners and weavers who are supported out of

the movement are non-Brahmins. And let me also give you my assurance as President and head of the All-India Spinners' Association that if I can get as many skilled workers on my terms from the non-Brahmins I will today dismiss all the Brahmin workers from the A.I.S.A. Let me further tell you that those few Brahmins who are serving the A.I.S.A. in the Tamil Nadu are almost every one of them capable of earning far more than the Association can ever give them. I give you my assurance that the A.I.S.A. is not a body which anyone may approach who has the slightest desire to enrich himself. It demands selflessness, self-sacrifice and purity of life. It would be impossible for me to work the A.I.S.A. on anything like the scale obtainable in the service of the Government. There are in the A.I.S.A. men who were at one time earning between Rs. 1,000 to 1,500 per mensem, who are now getting hardly Rs. 100 from the Association. If I begin to pay big salaries to such officers of A.I.S.A., I will have to file a petition in the Insolvency Court. (Laughter.) So you may take it from me that if there are Brahmins identified with the A.I.S.A., they approach it with the true Brahminical spirit. And I must confess to you, that non-Brahmin though I am, I have the greatest regard for the real and the true Brahminical spirit. If I can get a large number of men with that spirit, I can undertake with confidence to solve almost every one of the problems that afflict this country now. The root meaning of a Brahmin is one who knows God and the qualifications required of such a person are that he is an embodiment of learning, self-sacrifice and service. I admit that such Brahmins are not to be found everywhere in India. But I give you my own personal evidence that there are still in existence such Brahmins. And it is one of my businesses in India to get hold of every such Brahmin. It is my conviction that the A.I.S.A. does possess some Brahmins of very nearly the type I described to you. And personally I do not consider that it would be possible to conduct the great movement on the scale it is conducted now without the knowledge and self-sacrifice of such men. If I had the time and strength I would have spoken to you at greater length on this vexing Brahmin-non-Brahmin question. I venture to think that I have now a fair grasp of what this question is. I hope, as soon as I get the time, to reduce my views to writing. But whilst we may debate and discuss the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question, let us not forget the masses of India.

If I may put it in a nutshell, after all the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question also resolves itself into one of untouchability. And he who will successfully kill this cobra of untouchability will have

laid the axe at the root of the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question. For it is my clear conviction that it is this curse of untouchability which has crept into Hinduism and has poisoned Hinduism itself. After all, that untouchability which, in its most excessive and excruciating form, has given us the untouchables and unseeables, has been running through the core of Hinduism. The basis of untouchability is an arrogant assumption of superiority of one class over another; and once we have successfully dealt with the hydra-headed monster of superiority, I think, we have very little to fight about. I therefore invite you all to join me in this crusade against untouchability in every form. Whilst I am glad to find from your addresses and the talk I had this afternoon that your municipal schools are open to untouchables, I ask you not to be satisfied with that alone. When untouchability is really removed from our midst you will not find any untouchable quarter. The untouchables will have the same rights as the tallest Brahmin to enter the inmost sanctuary of any temple to which any Brahmin can go. They will have the same access that anybody else may have to public wells and public places. We shall then have no Brahmin tanks, non-Brahmin tanks and untouchable tanks. In the language of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Brahmin and the Bhangi will be the same to the Lord. And do not by any means be misled into thinking, as one is often misled by learned men, that this saying in the *Gita* applies to men of exceptional glory or spiritual merit. When untouchability is really dead and gone you will not find in your midst what I am about to describe just now.

I have among the papers that I brought with me a painful letter that a resident of this place has written to me. He tells me that the water of your river Thamraparni is polluted by the citizens of this place. He tells me while the medical authorities are injecting into your bodies matter to prevent cholera, you yourselves are injecting the cholera germs into the river by polluting it in various ways. The address of this Municipal Council thanks me for having spoken openly and frankly on some defects of municipal administration at several places. And the councillors tell me that they hope to profit by these speeches. I do hope that this hope of theirs will be fulfilled in the near future. May I suggest to you that you begin your work by cleansing the river bank of all the filth that is deposited on it from morning to morning. You might have observed that I have connected this evil also with untouchability. I speak not only from my personal experience but from that of thousands of men in India. We have

cultivated unfortunately a habit of not looking after our own sanitation, because of untouchability. We, the so-called higher classes, will not look after our own sanitation. That, we consider in our arrogance and prejudice, is specially the work of untouchables. And having developed a kind of contempt for these countrymen of ours, we will not even look as to what or how they are doing the work. They, poor men, have never been told even the elementary laws of sanitation. And hence whether it is the river bank or any other place it remains as dirty as ever even after they are cleaned by them. You may not know that it was in order to remedy this grave and serious defect that I had to raise a corps of scavengers for the Congress work at Ahmedabad, not from untouchables but from Brahmins and the non-Brahmins. If you want to do the cleaning and the scavenging thoroughly and inexpensively, every one of you should be your own scavenger. A mother who does not do scavenging for her baby ceases to be a mother. A little thought will show you that every one of you who has got the welfare of your town in his heart will have to take the position of such mothers. It will delight my heart if it could be told in my tour that you have also resolved to do the scavenging work yourselves.

I must omit to refer to many other social questions that I love to talk about. I must not forget the promise that I gave to the Nadar friends of Virudhunagar. You have perhaps read in the papers about this territorial untouchability. That such a fine body of clean and enterprising traders should be debarred from entering the temples in the districts of Tinnevelly and Madura is a serious reflection on the Hindus of these districts. I wish that you could by some means or other get rid of this evil at the earliest possible time. Now the volunteers will go about collecting while I sell these things in auction. I hope those who buy these pieces of cloth will take pride in wearing them.

The Hindu, 10-10-1927

70. LETTER TO PRAGJI DESAI

October 8, 1927

BHAISHRI PRAGJI,

I have your letter. I had written to Sastriji and Andrews even before I got it. I have sent your letter to Deenabandhu[1] along with my recommendation. Personally, I do not believe that he could have done anything wrong. Whatever the explanation, he is certainly not likely to have told a lie deliberately; we should, moreover, be grateful to him for any service he may render. Do nothing in haste. Since you have already lived in Natal, you need not take out a limited permit. But you may take out one if Sastri presses you to do so and undertakes to secure a few permits of more than a year's limit and if you really wish to stay in the Transvaal. That you are helping Manilal is very good indeed.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5030

71. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 8, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I am not going to write to you every day. For I fancy you do not need any soothing ointment. The wound[2] must be healed by this time. And your letter from the Ashram reassures me.

Yes, you may take up the dairy work or whatever you like. How about your feeds[3]? Chhotelal's message is unacceptable. He must write and that fully.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5285. Courtesy: Mirabehn

[1] C. F. Andrews
[2] The source has "world".
[3] "Food" in *Bapu's Letters to Mira*

72. SPEECH AT NAGERCOIL[1]

October 8, 1927

Whilst it gives me great pleasure to pay a second visit to this most beautiful part of India, I cannot conceal from you the deep grief I feel for the fact that in this fair land untouchability has a sway which it does not exercise in any other part of India. I feel deeply humiliated as a Hindu to find that it is in this enlightened Hindu State that untouchability appears in its most hideous form of unseeability and unapproachability. I speak with a due sense of my responsibility that this untouchability is a curse that is eating into the vitals of Hinduism, and I often feel that unless we take due precautions and remove this curse from our midst, Hinduism itself is in danger of destruction. That in this age of reason, in this age of wide travel, in this age of a comparative study of religions, there should be found people, some of whom are educated, to uphold the hideous doctrine of treating a single human being as an untouchable, or unapproachable, or unseeable because of his birth, passes my comprehension. As a lay, humble student of Hinduism and claiming to be one desirous of practising Hinduism in the spirit and to the letter let me tell you that I have found no warrant or support for this terrible doctrine. Let us not deceive ourselves into the belief that everything that is written in Sanskrit and printed is Shastra and has a binding effect upon us. That which is opposed to the fundamental maxims of morality, that which is opposed to trained reason, cannot be claimed as Shastra no matter how ancient it may be. There is enough warrant for the proposition that I have just stated in the Vedas, in the *Mahabharata* and in the *Bhagavad Gita*. I therefore hope that it will be possible for the enlightened ruler of Travancore to blot the curse out of the land during her reign. And what can be nobler than that a woman should be able to say to herself and her people that during her rule it has been possible for these people who have been suffering from age-long slavery to receive their full freedom?

But I know also her difficulties and those of her councillors. A government, be it ever so autocratic, is always timid and cautious in moving in such reforms. A wise government will welcome an agitation in connection with such reforms. An unwise govern-

[1] Published under the title "Message to Travancore"

ment impatient of public opinion will use violence in putting down such agitations. But from my personal experience of Vykom Satyagraha I know that you have a Government which will not only tolerate but welcome agitation in order to strengthen its hands to achieve this reform. The real initiative therefore must lie with the people of Travancore, and that too not with the so-called untouchables miscalled also *avarna*[1] Hindus. To me the very word *avarna* Hindu is a misnomer and a reproach to Hinduism. In many cases the remedy or the initiative lies not with them but with the so-called *savarna*[2] Hindus who have to rid themselves of the sin of untouchability. Let me tell you that it is not enough for you to hold the belief passively that untouchability is a crime. He who is a passive spectator of crime is really, and in law, an active participator in it. You must, therefore, begin and continue your agitation along all lawful and legitimate lines. Let me, if my voice will reach them, carry my voice to the Brahmin priests who are opposing this belated reform. It is a painful fact, but it is a historical truth, that priests who should have been the real custodians of religion have been instrumental in destroying the religion of which they have been custodians. I see before my eyes the Brahmin priests in Travancore and also elsewhere destroying the very religion of which they are supposed to be custodians, from their ignorance or worse. All their learning, when it is utilized in order to sustain a hideous superstition, a terrible wrong, turns to dust. I wish therefore that they will recognize before it is too late the signs of the times and march with the events which are taking them and us voluntarily or involuntarily along the path of truth. All the religions of the world, while they may differ in other respects unitedly proclaim that nothing lives in this world but truth.

Let me also warn the impatient reformer that unless he keeps himself on the right, strait and narrow path, he will hurt himself and hinder the reform about which he is rightly impatient. I venture to claim that I have placed in the hands of the reformer a matchless and priceless weapon in the form of satyagraha. But then the conditions of successful satyagraha are fairly hard. If he has faith in God, faith in himself, faith in his cause, he will never be violent, not even against his most fierce opponent whom he would accuse rightly of injustice, ignorance and even violence. I state without fear of contradiction that truth has never been vindicated by violence. A satyagrahi therefore expects to conquer

[1] Not belonging to any of the *varnas*

[2] Belonging to one of the *varnas*

his opponents or his so-called enemies not by violent force but by force of love, by process of conversion. His methods will be always gentle and gentlemanly. He will never exaggerate. And since non-violence is otherwise known as love it has no weapon but that of self-suffering. And above all, in a movement like that of the removal of untouchability which in my opinion is essentially religious and one of self-purification, there is no room for hate, no room for haste, no room for thoughtlessness and no room for exaggeration. Since satyagraha is one of the most powerful methods of direct action, a satyagrahi exhausts all other means before he resorts to satyagraha. He will thereforc constantly and continually approach the constituted authority, he will appeal to public opinion, educate public opinion, state his case calmly and coolly before everybody who wants to listen to him, and only after he has exhausted all these avenues will he resort to satyagraha. But when he has found the impelling call of the inner voice within him and launches out upon satyagraha he has burnt his boats and there is no receding. Let me, however, hope that it will not be necessary in this land for people to undergo all the suffering for removing a wrong which is so patent.

You will be glad to learn that immediately I entered this place, the Commissioner of Police was good enough to call on me and we discussed this great question. There are at the present moment two questions pending so far as I am aware; one in connection with the roads about Tiruvarppu and the other in connection with Suchindram. So far as I am aware in both these places the reformers have the right on their side. I understand that at the first place satyagrahis have already commenced their battle. I think it is a hasty step. I have therefore sent them a telegram asking them to desist for the time being and to see me tomorrow at Trivandrum. And I propose, if I am given the opportunity, as I hope I shall be, to discuss both these questions with the authorities. Though this visit of mine to Travancore was intended to be confined principally to khadi or khadi collections, fate threw me into the untouchability fray immediately on my arrival. I shall not spare myself during the brief time that is at my disposal in endeavouring humbly to assist both the State and the people in arriving at an honourable settlement.

Young India, 20-10-1927

73. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

TRAVANCORE,
[*October 9, 1927*][1]

CHI. MANILAL AND CHI. SUSHILA,

I get your letters regularly. We should not think about Sastriji's weakness to which you refer. It is a kind of weakness from which practically no one in Government service can be free. I adopted non-co-operation with the Government only when I found that its system was altogether evil. It is but natural that, having grown in the atmosphere in which you have, you cannot bear such flattery. But respect for elders requires that, as far as possible, we should not criticize them. You did well, of course, in drawing my attention to his weakness, but do not permit your behaviour to Sastriji or your sincere respect for him to be affected in any way. We have few patriotic workers as upright and able as Sastriji.

Devdas has been operated upon for piles. He is in Dr. Rajan's hospital. It is now six days since the operation. He is progressing satisfactorily. Almost all the men in the Ashram are engaged in flood-relief work. We arrived in Travancore today. Ba has gone to visit Kanyakumari. (Mahadev and I have visited the place once. Kakasaheb is also accompanying her. He, too, has gone).

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4729

[1] From the reference to Devdas's operation for piles; *vide* also "Letter to Mirabehn", 3-10-1927.

74. SPEECH AT TRIVANDRUM[1]

[On or before *October 10, 1927*][2]

As at Nagercoil, here too the best part of the day has been devoted to discussing this problem. Though it was partly a social call that I paid to the Dewan, we naturally began to discuss this thorny question. And if you found me coming to the meetings a few minutes late it was because I had gone to pay my respects to Her Highness the Maharani Regent, and I found myself again discussing this very question with her. I have always, after having paid the first visit to Travancore, looked forward to a series of visits to this enchanting land. Its most beautiful scenery, the location of Kanyakumari in Travancore, and the simplicity and freedom of the women of Travancore captivated me when I first came here. But the pleasure that all these thoughts and associations always gave me has been seriously marred by the thought that untouchability had assumed its most terrible shape in Travancore, and it has pained me to think that this evil has existed in that terrible form in a most ancient Hindu State, which has the privilege of occupying the first place in all India in educational progress. And this existence of untouchability in its extreme form has always caused me so much pain, because I consider myself to be a Hindu of Hindus saturated with the spirit of Hinduism. I have failed to find a single warrant for the existence of untouchability as we believe and practise it today in all those books which we call Hindu Shastras. But as I have repeatedly said in other places, if I found that Hinduism really countenanced untouchability I should have no hesitation in renouncing Hinduism itself. For I hold that religion, to be worthy of the name, must not be inconsistent with the fundamental truths of ethics and morality. But as I believe that untouchability is no part of Hinduism, I cling to Hinduism, but daily become more and more impatient of this hideous wrong. So, when I found that this question was agitating Travancore I had no hesitation in plunging myself into it. If I have taken up this question, I have done so not in any way to

[1] Published under the title "Message to Travancore"

[2] According to Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter", Gandhiji was in Trivandrum on October 9 and 10, 1927 and he made the speech after he had met the Maharaja and the Maharani of Travancore; *vide* also "Speech at Nagercoil", 8-10-1927.

embarrass the State. For I believe that Her Highness the Maharani Regent is solicitous about the welfare of her people. She also claims to be a reformer along these lines, and I fancy that I commit no breach of confidence when I tell you that she is eager to see that this wrong is removed at the earliest possible moment.

But then governments cannot afford to lead in matters of reform. By their very nature governments are but interpreters and executors of the expressed will of the people whom they govern, and even a most autocratic government will find itself unable to impose a reform which its people cannot assimilate. So, if I was a subject of Travancore State I should be entirely satisfied to know that my Government was willing to carry forward this reform as speedily as the people were willing to assimilate it. But having satisfied myself of that one thing, I should not rest content for one single moment till I had carried the message of reform from mouth to mouth and village to village. Well-ordered, persistent agitation is the soul of healthy progress, and so if I were you, I would not let the Government rest till this reform was carried through. Not allowing the Government to rest does not by any means mean embarrassing the Government. A wise government welcomes and needs the support and warmth and encouragement of such an agitation in order to achieve a reform which the Government itself wants. I know that when I was here last, I was told that the *savarna* (caste) Hindus were all most anxious for this reform of the abolition of untouchability in every shape and form. But I am afraid that the *savarna* Hindus have slept over their wish. They have not given a concrete form to their wish, and I believe that it is the bounden duty of every Hindu in the State to wake up to a sense of his duty and to wake up his lethargic brethren also to a sense of their duty. And I have no shadow of a doubt that if the *savarna* Hindus could with one voice express their wish, this monster of untouchability would go. It would be wrong therefore to ascribe our own lethargy and slothfulness to the Government.

But reformers in every community and every country are to be counted on one's finger tips; and I know that the brunt of all such reforms falls upon the devoted heads of that small band of reformers. What are the reformers then to do in the face of this evil of such long standing is really the question one has to solve. The reformers all over the world have resorted to one or other of the two methods that I am about to mention. The vast majority of them have drawn attention to evils by creating wild agitation and resorting to violence. They have resorted to agitation that embarrasses the Government, that embarrasses the people and

that disturbs the even tenor of the life of the citizens. The other school of reformers which I would call the non-violent school resorts to agitation of the gentle type. It disdains to draw attention by doing violence in thought, word or deed; but it draws attention by simple self-suffering. It never exaggerates. It never departs by a hair's breadth from truth, and whilst impatient of evil, does not mean ill even to the evil-doer. I have given that a short name and I have placed it before this country as before South Africa in the name of satyagraha. Do not for one moment mix up satyagraha with civil disobedience. Civil disobedience is no doubt a branch of satyagraha. It comes not at the beginning but at the fag-end. It presupposes immense discipline. It presupposes great self-restraint. It is based upon charity, and it never puts an unfavourable or unwarranted construction even upon the motives of its opponents. For it seeks not to coerce but to convert. You may therefore imagine my painful surprise when I found the whole of my doctrine and my remarks grossly misinterpreted by a friend who visited me in Virudhunagar.[1] I saw in the *Trivandrum Express* a report given by him of what had occurred between him and myself. It is a distortion from start to finish of the conversation that I had with him.

A VOICE: Shame.

But there is no warrant for crying "shame". The gentleman who cried shame evidently does not know the virtue or meaning of charity. For, I do not for one moment suggest that the friend who saw me has consciously or deliberately distorted my meaning. I am prepared to believe the explanation that he gave me this morning. But I have drawn your attention to this prominently in order to illustrate what I mean by satyagraha and also to show you the danger of those who do not know this fine weapon dabbling in it. I am simply giving this example in order to warn the would-be reformer against undertaking this method unless he is absolutely sure of his ground and unless he has got more than the ordinary measure of self-control, and seeing that I am enamoured of this method of satyagraha, which I consider to be a matchless weapon, I do not want it to be misused or abused, so long as I can prevent it. I therefore advised this friend to keep out of this problem until he had understood what satyagraha really was, and unless he had assimilated the true spirit of it.

But this again is not intended to damp the zeal of even a single reformer. I am going into the problem so much in detail for the

[1] For the *Hindu* version of the interview, *vide* Appendix III.

simple reason that I want you to work at it in order to get the quickest possible solution. I want therefore humbly to suggest that those of you who have had some experience of public life should take up this movement and make it their own and harness the energy and the will of the youths who are interested in this problem but do not know how to solve it. And I suggest also that you place yourselves in touch with the authorities and day after day worry the life out of them until this reform is achieved. For I am free to tell you that not only is Her Highness desirous of carrying out this reform but so is the Dewan himself. But belonging as he does to a different faith, you and I, Hindus, can appreciate his limitations. In my opinion, so far as the Government is concerned, it is on the side of reform; only the initiative will have to come from you and not from the Government. You will forgive me for having dealt with this very important question in a highly technical manner. I could not do otherwise as I have no other time at my disposal so that I could have convened a few of the leaders at a conference and discussed the pros and cons. I felt therefore that you would overlook the heaviness of my speech in connection with untouchability before a big audience as this.

One question was put to me arising out of this question this morning, and that was what was the bearing of varnashrama dharma upon untouchability. That means that I should say a few words about my conception of varnashrama dharma. So far as I know anything at all of Hinduism, the meaning of *varna* is incredibly simple. It simply means the following on the part of us all the hereditary and traditional calling of our forefathers, in so far as that traditional calling is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics, and this only for the purpose of earning one's livelihood. I regard this as the law of our being, if we would accept the definition of man given in all religions. Of all the animal creation of God, man is the only animal who has been created in order that he may know his Maker. Man's aim in life is not therefore to add from day to day to his material prospects and to his material possessions but his predominant calling is from day to day to come nearer his own Maker, and from this definition it was that the *rishis*[1] of old discovered this law of our being. You will realize that if all of us follow this law of *varna* we would limit our material ambition, and our energy would be set free for exploring those vast fields whereby and wherethrough we can know God. You will at once then see that nine-tenths of the activities that are

[1] Seers

today going on throughout the world and which are engrossing our attention would fall into disuse. You will then be entitled to say that *varna* as we observe it today is a travesty of the *varna* that I have described to you. And so it undoubtedly is, but just as we do not hate truth because untruth parades itself as truth, but we sift untruth from truth and cling to the latter, so also we can destroy the distortion that passes as *varna* and purify the state to which the Hindu society has been reduced today.

Ashrama is a necessary corollary to what I have stated to you, and if *varna* today has become distorted, *ashrama* has altogether disappeared. *Ashrama* means the four stages in one's life, and I wish the students who have kindly presented their purses to me —the Arts and Science students and the Law College students— were able to assure me that they were living according to the laws of the first *ashrama* and that they were *brahmacharis* in thought, word and deed. The *brahmacharyashrama* enjoins that only those who live the life of a *brahmachari*, at least up to 25 years, are entitled to enter upon the second *ashrama*, i.e., the *grihasthashrama*. And because the whole conception of Hinduism is to make man better than he is and draw him nearer to his Maker, the *rishis* set a limit even to the *grihasthashrama* stage and imposed on us the obligation of *vanaprastha* and sannyasa. But today you will vainly search throughout the length and breadth of India for a true *brahmachari*, for a true *grihastha*, not to talk of a *vanaprastha* and a sannyasi. We may, in our elongated wisdom, laugh at this scheme of life, if we wish to. But I have no doubt whatsoever that this is the secret of the great success of Hinduism. The Hindu civilization has survived the Egyptian, the Assyrian and the Babylonian. The Christian is but two thousand years old. The Islamic is but of yesterday. Great as both these are they are still in my humble opinion in the making. Christian Europe is not at all Christian, but is groping, and so in my opinion is Islam still groping for its great secret, and there is today a competition, healthy as also extremely unhealthy and ugly, between these three great religions. As years go by, the conviction is daily growing upon me that *varna* is the law of man's being and therefore as necessary for Christianity and Islam as it has been necessary for Hinduism and has been its saving. I refuse, therefore, to believe that *varnashrama* has been the curse of Hinduism, as it is the fashion nowadays in the South on the part of some Hindus to say. But that does not mean that you and I may tolerate for one moment or be gentle towards the hideous travesty of *varnashrama* that we see about us today. There is nothing

in common between *varnashrama* and caste. Caste, if you will, is undoubtedly a drag upon Hindu progress, and untouchability is, as I have already called it or described it, an excrescence upon *varnashrama*. It is a weedy growth fit only to be weeded out, as we weed out the weeds that we see growing in wheat fields or rice fields. In this conception of *varna*, there is absolutely no idea of superiority and inferiority. If I again interpret the Hindu spirit rightly, all life is absolutely equal and one. It is therefore an arrogant assumption on the part of the Brahmin when he says: "I am superior to the other three *varnas*." That is not what the Brahmins of old said. They commanded homage not because they claimed superiority, but because they claimed the right of service through and through without the slightest expectation of a reward. The priests, who today arrogate to themselves the function of the Brahmin and distort religion, are no custodians of Hinduism or Brahminism. Consciously or unconsciously they are laying the axe at the root of the very tree on which they are sitting, and when they tell you that Shastras enjoin untouchability and when they talk of pollution distance, I have no hesitation in saying that they are belying their creed and that they are misinterpreting the spirit of Hinduism. You will now perhaps understand why it is absolutely necessary for you Hindus who are here and listening to me to energize yourselves and rid yourselves of this curse. You should take pride in leading the way of reform, belonging as you do to an ancient Hindu State. So far as I can read the atmosphere around you here, the moment is certainly propitious for you if you will sincerely and energetically undertake this reform.

Young India, 20-10-1927

75. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 10, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter. Yes, I am satisfied with two letters per week from you. I should be satisfied with even one from you per week, as soon as I became free from all anxiety about you. I am that very nearly now. And so I too have dropped off writing daily to you.

Continue to discuss your plans with Krishnadas, Surendra, Chhotelal and others. Ask them to speak out their minds. You may appoint additional warders. Do not omit to go to Bhansali. He has taken a seven days' fast. This I had consented to long ago. I know that your presence soothes him.

Yes, you will come to Orissa if all goes well here as well as there. You have to keep fit.

I am writing to Mr. Smith about some books to be sent to you.

I met the Resident here yesterday. The first question he asked me was whether you were with me and then he spoke to me about your brother-in-law having replaced him whilst he was on leave. I told him you were with me for a few days in Chettinad.

I am finding the hair question somewhat difficult myself. The thing is good in itself, I have no doubt. I am not sure about its advisability. But I shall not think more about it. Let the women there give their final decision. Why does Mani oppose the removal? Let there be no haste over it. I wonder what Lady Slade will say about it? I would like you to discuss the proposal with her too. I know how keenly interested she is in everything about you.

You know that Maganlal has a fine collection of dairy books. You should look through some of them.

Love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5286. Courtesy: Mirabehn

76. *LETTER TO HORACE G. ALEXANDER*

ON TOUR,
October 10, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have been keeping your letter in front of me all these days. As your time for going to the Ashram, Sabarmati, is now nearing according to your letter, I write this to say how welcome you would be at the Ashram. But I regret to inform you that I shall not be there to receive you personally. I am just now touring in the south in connection with the message of the spinning-wheel and shall be so doing till the middle of November after which I shall be going to Orissa. I do not expect to be in the Ashram before the beginning of January.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

HORACE G. ALEXANDER, ESQ.
C/o J. S. HOYLAND, ESQ.
HOLYROAD
NAGPUR

From a photostat: G.N. 1404

77. *LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI*

TRIVANDRUM,
October 10, 1927

You need not despair. I know that you are awake and struggling. From my own experience I know that it is extremely difficult to remain unaffected by desire towards one's wife and, therefore, feel sympathy for you. You two will not, however, succeed in overcoming lustful desire towards each other till you give up being together alone, begin to sleep in different rooms and, if necessary, live completely away from each other for some time. You have not told me how far your wife co-operates with you. If you have her co-operation, your way is easy; otherwise, it is difficult. You must succeed in this struggle. And be sure that as your heart grows softer you will have increasing control over your desire. To submit to desire requires hardness of heart. He whose heart is filled exclusively by compassion for others has no moment free to give to lustful thought. That is why I have often said that a pure *brahmachari* will never yield to anger. The instances to the contrary which we come across in the Shastras are of men who had no experience of real *brahmacharya* and observed it only in its physical aspect. If you reflect more deeply, you, too, will realize the truth of this statement.

All who feel concerned about my fast should give up their fear. Surely, I have not undertaken the fast because of Devdas. Their fear is the result of excessive attachment to me and of ignorance. I never undertake a fast led away by the impulse of the moment. When I do fast, it is for my own purification and peace of mind. A fast, instead of being regarded as a cause for concern, should be welcomed as a warning. A person who is sincere in his striving does not fear the watchfulness of his parents or friends, but welcomes it rather. People should look at my fasts in that light. I admit that the weapon of fast is often abused. For a votary of truth, however, fasts undertaken after due deliberation are extremely useful. I have no doubt about this in my mind. Do we not know that the best things are liable to the worst abuse? Can people with a bad reputation deceive others as much as people looked upon as good have often done?

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

78. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

[About *October 10, 1927*][1]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

I have both your letters. I see there is an irreconcilable difference of opinion regarding X[2] in the Ashram itself. I would no more trouble you about this affair. I have been writing something to Chhaganlal Joshi. Having done this I shall observe silence for some time now and I shall try to reopen this chapter in the month of January when I reach the Ashram. I still have my doubts. Innocent people do not commit suicide. X's letters to me make me suspicious. You know well that he was connected with the Jagannath incident. I did not succeed in subduing this rebellion on the part of X. I have, therefore, been harbouring a suspicion. I have a letter from Ramdas telling me about the reasons for his suspicion. These are not strong enough but the fact remains that Ramdas had his own suspicions. I think it horrid for X to have gone away without informing anyone. I don't think he is hiding himself anywhere. If this was the case, I would be relieved from a great misery. Because at the moment X as well as X and X whom I regard as my son and daughters are victims of my suspicion.

I do not need rectification of the dairy accounts. I want a co-ordinated report from both of you. The assurance you gave me at Bangalore is enough for me. But Narandas wrote to me there were 21 mistakes pertaining to figures and they pointed to the loss the dairy suffered. I do not say you are slow of improvement. My only concern was that if our mistake was such as would misrepresent the results, we should issue a clarification. Please therefore discuss the figures with Narandas and let me know the actual results.

I have your third letter, in which you ask me to go over there. As regards my health Mahadev has written [to you] yesterday. I have no complaint. What can we say about the Press? In case anything happens to me you shall certainly get a wire from someone.

[1] From the references to errors in the dairy accounts and to X's disappearance from the Ashram

[2] Names not reproduced

I am quite anxious to go over there. That is the place for me whether the atmosphere is healthy or unhealthy; particularly since it is unhealthy. Where can I run away from that unhealthy atmosphere? I am myself to blame the most for the unhealthy atmosphere prevailing there, for I have never stayed there for any length of time. So I do not have to be persuaded to go there. I have got stuck here, because I must not leave my work here unfinished and we should, I think, get work out of the body as long as we can. I, therefore, expect to be there by the beginning of January.

"But never say die."[1]

"Never take a defeat even at the cost of your life."

Or,

"The way to Him is known to the valiant, it is not for the coward."

Or,

"Having become unattached to happiness and unhappiness, loss and gain, victory and defeat, you engage yourself in battle. In this way no sin will come to you."[2]

"It is only right to be strict with ourselves and magnanimous towards our opponents."

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 7768. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

79. *LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN*

Aso Vad 1 [*October 11, 1927*][3]

DEAR SISTERS,

It appears my last letter has caused a good deal of commotion among you. That is perhaps why I have not as yet heard from you. I am glad of the commotion. I shall not feel satisfied if your relations with one another are merely on the basis of formal courtesy; nor should you be satisfied with it either. It should not be our desire just to get on together anyhow. We must become one in heart. We should not deceive ourselves or others, or the world. So whatever is working in our hearts must be brought out into the open. Once the heart is thoroughly purified, it will take

[1] This and the subsequent quotations are presumably intended to encourage the addressee.

[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 38

[3] The year is inferred from the reference to the strained relations among the Ashram women, *vide* "Letter to Ashram Women", 26-9-1927.

long for it to become impure again. But if any impurity is allowed to remain in the heart, even good thoughts will get sullied, jut as water poured into a dirty vessel gets sullied. If we begin by being suspicious of someone, we end by suspecting everything he does.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3670

80. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

[*October 11, 1927*][1]

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI,

I have your letter. Shri Amritlal Thakkar believes that the Conference[2] will not be held now. As you know, the one for this year could not be held. I feel that the Conference should now be given a new direction. In my present state of mind, I cannot fully associate myself with its work; in fact I am afraid that I am likely to prove a bitter dose. Is it not, therefore, better to lay a new foundation and build afresh?

Blessings from
BAPU

ITINERARY
16-17 Coimbatore
18 Pollachi
19 Tiruppur
20 Gobichettipalayam
21 Erode
22 Salem
23-24 Tiruchengode
25 Calicut
26-31 Mangalore
Up to November 19, Ceylon

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI PAREKH
BARRISTER, JETPUR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5692

[1] From the postmark
[2] Kathiawar Political Conference

81. SPEECH AT QUILON[1]

October 11, 1927

Untouchability poisons Hinduism as a drop of arsenic poisons milk. Knowing the quality of milk, and the use of milk and knowing the quality of arsenic, we should be impatient with the man sitting near a pitcher of milk and trying to remove arsenic grain by grain, and we should throw the whole pitcher overboard. Even so do I as a Hindu feel that the curse of untouchability is rendering the milk of Hinduism altogether poisoned and impure. I feel therefore that patience in a matter of this character is not a virtue. It is impossible to restrain ourselves. Patience with evil is really trifling with evil and with ourselves. I have therefore not hesitated to say that the State of Travancore should lead in the matter of the reform and blot out the evil at a single stroke. But I know also that it was not possible even for a Hindu State to do away with this evil, unless it was backed and actively backed by its Hindu population. And so my appeal must be mostly to you rather than to the head of the State; and to every Hindu in this meeting I wish to make a definite personal appeal. You and I have long neglected our duty to the so-called untouchables and unapproachables, and to this extent you and I have been false representatives of Hinduism. I ask you without the slightest hesitation summarily to reject the advance of every person who comes to you in defence of untouchability. Remember that in this age whatever one man or group of men and women do does not remain secret for any length of time, and we are daily being weighed and found wanting so long as we nurse untouchability in our bosom. You must remember that all the great religions of the world are at the present time in the melting pot. Let us not ostrich-like hide our faces and ignore the danger that lies at the back of us. I have not a shadow of doubt that in the great turmoil now taking place either untouchability has to die or Hinduism has to disappear. But I do know that Hinduism is not dying, is not going to die, because I see untouchability is a corpse struggling with its last breath to hold on for a little while.

Young India, 20-10-1927

[1] Published under the title "Message to Travancore"

82. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

ON TOUR,
October 12, 1927

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have the two letters promised by you and the letter containing your reply to Nadkarni. The reply will be duly published.[1]

I am anxious to know what you thought of the Spinning Essay and what you said to the Viceroy.[2]

I do hope that your having sent in Sir Visvesvarayya's name will not be considered too late.

I hope you received my letter about Pragji and Medh. I had your telegram about Orissa.

I do not mind your spending twelve annas to tell me when your hand is completely restored.

With love,

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2622

83. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, ALLEPPEY

October 12, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for your addresses as also the several purses that have been presented to me on behalf of *Daridranarayana*. As I stated at Nagercoil, immediately on my entering the Travancore border, I found myself immersed in studying and assisting at a solution of the untouchability question. And on this the last day of my all-too-brief tour in Travancore for the purpose, I propose to devote the best part of my address to the same question. I wish indeed that I had more time at my disposal so that I could have stayed here longer and studied the question still better and given what assistance I could on the spot.

[1] *Vide* "The Use of Tractors", *Young India*, 3-11-1927.

[2] For Gandhiji's earlier letter on the subject, *vide* "Letter to C.F. Andrews", 1-10-1927.

Being somewhat of an expert on this question, I feel that I could, however humbly it may be, render assistance both to the State and the people in arriving at a just solution. I am glad, as well as thankful, to be able to say that from Her Highness the Maharani Regent down to the officials of the State, they have received my remarks in the same spirit as I tendered. I could entertain no doubt whatsoever in connection with the *avarna* friends. For I regard myself as an untouchable amongst untouchables and I have not hesitated to call myself in several meetings a Nayadi. Probably some of you even do not know what a Nayadi is. To the eternal disgrace of the modern Hindu, Nayadi is the being who occupies the lowest state even amongst the so-called untouchables. His very sight is supposed to defile the *savarna* Hindus. So he is not only relegated to the gutter as we call it, but he is not permitted to present himself to the *savarna* Hindu. I had the painful duty of seeing some specimens of Nayadis when I was passing through the bazaars—I wonder if it was Cochin or Trichur. And I assure you that if I had the time at my disposal, if I had no other irons in the fire and if I had the courage, I would leave the haunts of the *savarnas* and give myself the pleasure of living in the midst of these unseeables, the Nayadis. That is a penance all too small for the great crime that we Hindus have committed against a portion of humanity and are continuing. But I flatter myself with the belief, or I deceive myself into the belief, that by not living in the midst of the Nayadis, I am doing a greater penance because of my experiencing mentally the tortures that I feel by a sense of the great sin that has burdened Hinduism and Hindus today. I say with a full sense of my responsibility as a sane and sanatani[1] Hindu, as I call myself, that we Hindus will have to answer before God and man for this great sin if we do not wake up betimes and wipe it from our midst.[2]

I had a very long discussion with many of the Ezhuva leaders this afternoon, and I tell you that if I was not told that they were Ezhuvas I should not have known them to be such, nor could I see the slightest distinction between them and those who call themselves *savarnas*. Their pecuniary position is any day better than of many of the *savarnas*. Their educational qualifications leave nothing to be desired, and their personal cleanli-

[1] Orthodox

[2] What follows is from "Message to Travancore", published in *Young India*, 20-10-1927.

ness appeared to be infinitely superior to that of many Brahmins and others whom I have seen during my travels from one end of the country to the other. And so when I faced these friends and read their address, I hung my Hindu head in shame, that these friends were considered untouchable and unfit to walk along some of the public roads in Travancore, and that these were the friends whose presence in our temples would defile the temple ground, and that these were the men who could not send their sons and daughters to at least some of the Government schools although they were as much taxpayers as the tallest in this assembly. For let it be remembered that as against these inhuman disabilities, they are not excused from paying the tax in the same measure that *savarnas* pay to the State. This then is in my opinion a cause to which it is the duty of many Hindus who feel for their religion to dedicate their lives, and I do hope that Her Highness the Maharani Regent, enlightened as she is, will not rest content until this disgrace is removed from Travancore, and from all the talks I had with Her Highness, with the Dewan, and the Commissioner of Police, and last but not least, the Devaswam Commissioner, I am leaving Travancore in the hope that at least the roads question will be solved to the satisfaction of all concerned, and it is in that fervent hope that I have not hesitated to advise the deputation today to suspend satyagraha, and I am glad to be able to say to this meeting that this deputation were kind enough to listen to my advice and suspend satyagraha whilst this question was being satisfactorily settled. God forbid that there should be any disappointment with reference to the hope that I carry with me. But I have told the friends that if the redress that is their due is not given in time, and if after they have exhausted all preliminary proposals they fail in getting relief, it will not only be open to them, but it will be their bounden duty, to resort to satyagraha in order to win what is their right. . . .

Let me reiterate to you the implications of the hope I am taking with me. Flimsy in one respect though I consider what is called the Vykom settlement to be, in other respects and from another point of view it is a settlement honourable alike to the State and the *avarna* Hindus. It is a settlement which I consider to be the bed-rock of freedom. I call it a bed-rock of freedom because the settlement is a document between the people and the State constituting a big step in the direction of liberty in one respect at least. But so far as the *avarna* Hindus are concerned it is in no sense a final settlement, it was the minimum that they permitted themselves to be satisfied with at the time

and for the Government never to recede from. Government by that settlement erected for themselves a platform to make further advances from. Its interpretation therefore must be always in favour of the *avarna* Hindus. Nor can it ever be interpreted to curtail the liberties of non-Hindus. Applying this principle to the present trouble at Tiruvarppu it is not possible for Government to curtail any substantial right of Christians and other non-Hindus who have been using the roads there. It is therefore their bounden duty to throw these roads open to *avarna* Hindus, and any difficulty that there may be in the way of the roads being thrown open, it is for the Government to get over, and not for the *avarna* Hindus to accommodate the Government over. Similar though not precisely the same is the case now pending in connection with the roads round the Suchindram temple, and I am hoping that in the very near future the State will overcome all difficulties there may be in giving the relief I have suggested.

Subject to this I have given my advice to the Ezhuva friends to suspend their activities, and I venture to hope that in the circumstances the order the Government have thought it necessary to serve on Sjt. Madhavan will be withdrawn without delay. I think the order at least now wholly unnecessary, as also is the general order prohibiting the holding of meetings within a certain radius of Tiruvarppu.[1]

MR. T. K. MADHAVAN: Mahatmaji, I am asked not to speak in the whole of the Kottayam district.

I made a mistake. The order prevents him from speaking in the whole of Kottayam. I think that in the circumstances I have mentioned the order is wholly unnecessary. And so is another general order prohibiting the holding of meetings within that radius.

One word to these *avarna* Hindu friends. I share to the full extent their grief. And if I could convince myself or somebody else could convince me, that by forfeiting my life today, I would secure the fullest charter of liberty to them, I should do so this very instant. But till that conviction is forced upon me, I content to live and work for this precious freedom. I therefore ask them to remember that whilst it is open to us to become impatient whenever we want to remove a gross abuse, it is necessary for us to hold ourselves in patience. Progress is absolutely assured whenever there is at the back of it truthfulness, self-sacrifice

[1] What follows is from *The Hindu*, 15-10-1927.

and an unalterable determination. The pages of history, which are open to anybody who cares to read them, show that those who have worked for reforms have worked away in the fullest disregard of consequences, but believing that work is its own reward and that it ensures the result which is hoped for. I therefore ask them to work in the spirit of the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*. It teaches us that it is given to mankind to work, work and work, but not to control the results. And with this unalterable promise given in that divine book, there is no occasion whatsoever to lose hope or to become madly impatient. Let them also understand that today throughout the length and breadth of India, not one Hindu like myself is working in the same cause, but there are many Hindus, brilliant men, tried servants of India and tried workers known to the whole of the nation, they are also working to the best of their ability to the same cause. I have not a shadow of doubt that in the very near future, we shall all find that this untouchability which is a horrible nightmare is a thing of the past.

One word to the *savarna* Hindus. I have hitherto said what is the duty of the State and what is the duty of the *avarna* Hindus. But the duty of the *savarnas* is not less great; if anything, it is much greater. A State after all reflects the opinion of its subjects. The crime of untouchability is a crime committed by *savarna* Hindus. The penance therefore is due by them. And it is the duty of the *savarna* Hindus to help the *avarna* Hindus in every conceivable manner. If they will but extend their active sympathy to this cause and bestir themselves and worry the Government they will find that it is totally unnecessary for the *avarna* Hindus to resort to the terrible ordeal of self-suffering which satyagraha means. If they will take the credit for achieving this reform in Travancore, they should not wait till the cup of bitterness is full up to the brim and forces the *avarna* Hindus into a position which it will be our disgrace to put them in.

I come to another important subject before I come to khadi which has really brought me to Travancore this time. I wish to refer to the cursed drink habit. Let those who are addicted to this vicious habit understand that it is a habit which dehumanizes man. He who is under the influence of drink knows no distinction between wife and sister. Some of the greatest crimes in history have been committed by men under the influence of drink. I have myself had the pain of witnessing in South Africa many a man, otherwise considered to be the most respectable, wallowing in the gutters under the influence of drink. It is the duty of the

sober people of Travancore to compel the Government to do away with this *abkari*[1] revenue. I hold it to be an immoral source of revenue. It is really your duty to agitate till the drink evil is abolished from this land. Let not this land of beauty, with which Nature has surrounded it, stink with the curse of drink. And if you realize, as Hindus, Christians or Mussalmans, the essential oneness of man and regard your neighbours as your own step-brothers and sisters, it is your duty to go into the midst of those who are given to the habit of drink and by gentle persuasion wean them from it. I hold total prohibition as an absolute necessity because so long as the temptation is put in the way of the person given to the drink habit, no amount of persuasion would keep him away from this habit. The movement therefore amongst those who are given to the habit and with the State must go side by side.

It should not be necessary now for me to take up much of your time over the message of the spinning-wheel. Your purses are an earnest of your faith in khadi. But if you have convinced yourselves that your duty towards the poorest of the millions is discharged sufficiently by your having flung a few rupees in my face, you are sadly mistaken. I should not be able to use the purses that I have been receiving throughout the tour and they would be an unbearable burden to me, if you refuse to wear khadi for the manufacture of which through the sacred hands of the toiling millions I propose to work. I regard these gifts of yours therefore as your promise henceforth to use khadi for your household and use nothing else. You should also endeavour to organize the villages of Travancore through the spinning-wheel. In order to create the spinning atmosphere throughout the land, it is necessary for us all to spin by way of sacrifice and example. It is necessary also for the intelligent people to become experts in spinning if we are to organize the villages through the spinning-wheel. I was pleased to hear in Trivandrum that the State had already voted a certain sum for the introduction of the spinning-wheel in State schools. Inasmuch as the women of Travancore are dressed in spotlessly white clothing, Travancore is really the easiest place in India where khadi can become easily popular. Let me add one more reason why you should clothe yourselves from khadi made in Travancore. When you agitate for total prohibition you will have the argument flung in your face that the *abkari* revenue, which I understand amounts to over twenty

[1] Excise duty

lakhs of rupees, has got to be somehow or other found if the children of Travancore are to be educated. If forty lakhs of people of Travancore were to be clothed in khadi manufactured in Travancore itself, I assure you that you will be saving four times forty lakhs of rupees per year out of khadi. Study intelligently the economics of khadi and you will find that this replacing of *abkari* revenue will become the easiest problem that is possible. You can achieve this grand purpose not by utilizing the time that you are otherwise using for any valuable work but by utilizing simply that which is wasted. This spinning-industry is not designed to replace a single existing industry. But it is intended to utilize the leisure hours of the nation. I have the evidence of many Travancoreans that the people of Travancore have so much leisure time that it would not be wrong to say that they lead somewhat lazy life.

I hope that all these three things that I have suggested to you, and on which I have spoken to you, will abide with you after I have gone. I pray to God that He will give you the wisdom to understand my word and the power to act up to it.

The Hindu, 15-10-1927 and *Young India*, 20-10-1927

84. NOTES

True Education

Professor Malkani sends the following wire from Ahmedabad:

> Proceeding Bombay meet Sir Purushottamdas. Help from Central Fund urgently needed. Vallabhbhai promised support. Kripalani Vidyapith volunteers going Sind.

Sir M. Visvesvarayya is reported to have spoken as follows at the opening of the All-India Swadeshi Bazaar and Industrial Exhibition at Poona on the 3rd instant.

> If my voice can have any influence with the universities, I would beg them, so long as our present economic inefficiency continues, to restrict admissions to literary and theoretical courses and induce the student population to covet degrees in agriculture, engineering, technology and commerce.

Whilst Sir M. Visvesvarayya has emphasized one grave defect of our present education which places exclusive emphasis on literary merit, I would add a graver defect in that students are made to think that whilst they are pursuing their literary

studies, they may not do acts of service at the sacrifice of their studies, be it ever so small or temporary. They will lose nothing and gain much if they would suspend their education, literary or industrial, in order to do relief work, such as is being done by some of them in Gujarat. The end of all education should surely be service, and if a student gets an opportunity of rendering service even whilst he is studying, he should consider it as a rare opportunity and treat it not really as a suspension of his education but rather its complement. I therefore heartily welcome the idea of the students of the Gujarat National College extending their works of service beyond the confines of Gujarat. I remarked only the other day that we must not become narrowly provincial. Sind is not so well organized for producing an army of relief workers as Gujarat is. It is therefore expected of Gujarat to send volunteers to Sind or any other province wherever their services can be utilized. And after all, Gujarat in general and Gujarat national students in particular owe a debt to Sind in that she sent in the course of the Non-co-operation movement three distinguished educationists—Acharya Gidwani, Acharya Kripalani and Adhyapak[1] Malkani. If therefore Gujarat students will go to Sind, they will do nothing but a simple duty.

Help from Kangri Gurukul

The response received by Gujarat to the appeal for help in her distress has been most gratifying. Among the early helpers were two institutions that I should like to mention, Gurukul Kangri and Shantiniketan, and knowing how their gifts will delight my heart they even sent telegrams to me advising me of their donations, which were sent directly to Sjt. Vallabhbhai Patel. Acharya Ramdevji sends me particulars regarding the four instalments sent on behalf of the Gurukul. He tells me that even more may be expected, and adds:

> The teachers have paid a percentage from their salaries, the *brahmacharis* have saved money by washing their own clothes instead of having them washed by dhobis as is done usually, and the *brahmacharinis* of the girls' school have saved money by giving up ghee and milk for a time.

Let those in Gujarat who are receiving relief and who are distributing relief remember what self-denial lies behind some of the donations received. The present self-denial of the Gurukul boys and girls reminds me of the practice of self-denial first in-

[1] Teacher

augurated by the late Swami Shraddhanandji when he was Governor of the Gurukul, for helping our countrymen in South Africa during satyagraha there. Such acts of self-sacrifice are therefore what one would always expect on given occasions from boys and girls brought up in the traditions of the Gurukul.

About Cow-protection Prize Essay

The reader will recall that in *Young India* of October 29, 1925, I published a note offering on behalf of Sjt. Revashanker Jagjivan Jhaveri a prize of Rs. 1,000 for the best essay on cow-protection in English, Sanskrit or Hindi, and similarly in *Navajivan* for December 13, 1925 a prize of Rs. 251 was announced on behalf of Sjt. Tulsidas Khimji for the best essay on the same subject in Gujarati. These were the terms:

> The essay should be delivered at Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, to the Secretary, All-India Cow-Protection Association, on or before March 31st 1926. (The time was since extended to 31st May).... It should deal with the origin, meaning and implications of cow-protection quoting texts in support. It should contain an examination of the Shastras and find whether there is any prohibition in the Shastras for conducting dairies and tanneries by associations interested in cow-protection. It should trace the history of cow-protection in India and methods adopted to achieve it from time to time. It should contain statistics giving the number of cattle in India and examine the question of pasture land and the effect of Government policy about pasture land in India and suggest remedy to be adopted for securing cow-protection.

Acharya Anandashankar Bapubhai Dhruva, Sjt. Chintamani Vinayak Vaidya and Sjt. Valji Govindji Desai were appointed judges. I regret to announce that the judges have independently of one another come to the conclusion that no essay has been found to be worthy of the prize in terms of its conditions. I am sorry for the delay in announcing the result of the competition for causes into which it is unnecessary to go. But I would ask those who have studied the question and who are interested in this important question to attempt an essay worthy of this subject. Let those who competed for the prize try again. The judges inform me that some competitors do give evidence of industry but they are of opinion that even these have not given to the subject the diligent research that it deserves and that hardly any has kept himself to the conditions laid down for winning the prize.

Whilst the prize should be deemed as withdrawn, if any worthy attempt is made and the essays sent to the secretary, I

do not anticipate any difficulty in inducing the judges to examine the essays or the donors to give the prizes if any essay is found worthy. If enough competitors send their names and qualifications in advance of their intention to make or remake the attempts, I hope to be able to reannounce the prizes, the conditions of course being the same as before.

Young India, 13-10-1927

85. HINDU LAW AND MYSORE

Sjt. Bhashyam Aiyengar of Bangalore writes:

> The principles of Hindu Law as at present administered are antiquated and opposed to our sense of equity and justice. I shall give a few instances[1]:

The prominence I have given to the foregoing need not imply that I endorse every one of the reforms suggested by the writer. That some of them require immediate attention I have no doubt. Nor have I any doubt that all of them demand serious consideration from those who would rid Hindu society of its anachronisms.

In pre-British days there was no such thing as rigid Hindu Law governing the lives of millions. The body of regulations known as *smritis* were indicative rather than inflexible codes of conduct. They never had the validity of law such as is known to modern lawyers. The observance of the restraints of the *smritis* was enforced more by social than legal sanctions. The *smritis* were, as is evident from the self-contradictory verses to be found in them, continually passing, like ourselves, through evolutionary changes, and were adapted to the new discoveries that were being made in social science. Wise kings were free to procure new interpretations to suit new conditions. Hindu religion or Hindu Shastras never had the changeless and unchanging character that is now being sought to be given to them. No doubt in those days there were kings and their councillors who had the wisdom and the authority required to command the respect and allegiance of society. But now the custom has grown up of thinking that *smritis* and everything that goes by the name of Shastras is absolutely unchangeable. The verses which we find to be unworkable

[1] The correspondent mentioned ten injunctions relating to inheritance, widow remarriage, inter-caste marriage, adoption, etc., and suggested that the Mysore State should undertake the desired reforms through legislation.

or altogether repugnant to our moral sense, we conveniently ignore. This very unsatisfactory state of things has to be, some day or other and somehow, changed if Hindu society is to become a progressive unit in human evolution. The British rulers cannot make these changes because of their different religion and their different ideal. Their ideal is to sustain their commercial supremacy and to sacrifice every other interest, moral or otherwise, for the attainment of that ideal. Unless therefore Hindu public opinion clearly demands it, and it can be made without any injury to their ideal, no drastic change in our customs or so-called laws will be attempted or countenanced by them. And it is difficult to focus Hindu public opinion on identical points in a vast territory like British India covering many schools of thought and law. And such public opinion as there is is naturally and necessarily preoccupied with the struggle for political freedom. A State like Mysore however has no such limitations or preoccupations. In my humble opinion, it is its duty to anticipate British India in the matter of removing the anachronisms in the Hindu Law and the like. Mysore State is large and important enough to attempt such changes. It has become a progressively constitutional monarchy. It has a Legislative Assembly representative enough to initiate social changes. It seems already to have passed a resolution asking for the appointment of a committee to consider what changes, if any, are necessary in the Hindu Law. And if a strong committee representing orthodox as well as progressive Hindu opinion is appointed, its recommendations must prove useful and pave the way towards making the necesssary changes. I do not know the rules of the Mysore Assembly governing the constitution of such committees, but there is little doubt that they are elastic enough to admit of appointing or co-opting members from outside the Mysore State. Anyway Sjt. Bhashyam Aiyengar has shown that a revision of the Hindu Law is absolutely necessary in several cases. No State is better fitted than Mysore for initiating the belated reform.

Young India, 13-10-1927

86. NEILL STATUE SATYAGRAHA[1]

In accordance with the promise made by the volunteers connected with this movement, they have sent me papers giving the particulars I had asked for. From them it appears that during the six weeks that the struggle had been on when the papers were sent to me, thirty volunteers had courted imprisonment. Of these 29 are Hindus and one Mussalman, one lady aged 35 and one girl aged 9, her daughter. Of these thirty, two apologized and got themselves released. The apology of a few, if it does not become infectious, does not matter. 'Blacklegs' will be found in every struggle. The men who have gone to jail are not noted men. This is no loss, rather it is a gain in a satyagraha struggle which requires no prestige save that of truth, and no strength save that of self-suffering which comes only from an immovable faith in one's cause and from a completely non-violent spirit.

The volunteers must not be impatient. Impatience is a phase of violence. A satyagrahi has nothing to do with victory. He is sure of it, but he has also to know that it comes from God. His is but to suffer.

The papers give me an account of income and expenditure. The income is given in detail and amounts to Rs. 228-2-6. The expenditure amounting to Rs. 228-2-6 [*sic*] is made up as follows: Meals, etc., Rs. 71-7-9, conveyance Rs. 53-2-6, notices for meetings, etc., Rs. 39-4-0, establishment and postal charges Rs. 21-8-9, lights at meetings Rs. 22-8-0. I am not satisfied with these expenses. I have asked for more details. But subject to correction, I would warn the satyagrahis against spending much on meals, conveyances and lights. I know that my own meetings are not free from extravagance in these items. The Congress work too is not unopen to the charge of over-expenditure. But it is better to illustrate what I mean by what happens to me, the self-styled representative of *Daridranarayana*. Where six oranges will do, sixty are brought; where one car will do, six are ready, and where a hurricane lantern will serve the purpose, incandescent burners are produced. Let the satyagrahis understand that they have to use every pice they get as a miser uses his hoards. I suggest their getting a local man of note to take charge of their moneys and a philanthropic auditor auditing their accounts free of charge.

[1] *Vide* also "The Neill Statue and Non-violence", 29-9-1927.

Strictest honesty and care are necessary in the handling of public funds. This is an indispensable condition of growth of a healthy public life.

The third paper I have before me is their appeal to the public. A satyagrahi's appeal must contain moderate language. The appeal before me though unexceptionable admits of improvement. "Not only Neill but all of his nefarious breed must go", is a sentence that mars the appeal. General Neill is no more. What we have to deal with is the statue and not even the statue as such. We seek to destroy the principle for which the statue stands. We wish to injure no man. And we wish to gain our object by enlisting public opinion not excluding English opinion in our favour by self-suffering. Here there is no room for the language of anger and hate.

So much for the volunteers.

The public owe a duty to them. They may not go to jail but they can supervise, control and guide and help the movement in many ways. Agitation for the removal of the statue is agitation for the removal of but a symptom of a grave disease. And while the removal of the statue will not cure the disease it will alleviate the agony and point the way to reaching the disease itself. It is also often possible to reach a deep-seated disease by dealing with some of its symptoms. So long therefore as the satyagrahi volunteers fight the battle in a clean manner and strictly in accordance with the conditions applicable to satyagraha, they deserve public support and symapthy.

Young India, 13-10-1927

87. KHADI SAMPLES

The technical department of the A.I.S.A. reports to me that all the khadi depots have not furnished it with the particulars required with their samples, and some have not even sent their samples. Out of nearly 40 names of places from which samples have been received, nearly 20 have failed to comply with the requirements. I therefore give them below:

Each piece should be four square yards with a ticket bearing the following particulars:

1. Width in inches;
2. Length of piece in yards;
3. Number of strands in warp per inch, and count of yarn used for warp and number of strands in weft per inch;

4. Weight in *tolas* per square yard;
5. Cost price per yard; and
6. Sale price per yard.

Khadi depots should realize that these particulars are required as much for their benefit as for that of the khadi movement in general. It is impossible for the technical department to make generalizations, draw deductions, and guide khadi producers, unless it is assisted in its research work by the various khadi depots and other workers. Nor is it possible to evolve discipline unless there is quick response made to the head office by all subordinate organizations, and it will be impossible to enable the All-India Spinners' Association to realize its aim unless there is voluntary discipline evolved at all points of its activity.

Young India, 13-10-1927

88. SPEECH AT ERNAKULAM

October 13, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for the address and your purses. It will be interesting for you to know how these purses stand; nearly Rs. 500 from the students and Rs. 400 and odd from the public. I hope that the public assembled here will understand the meaning of the difference and make it up before they leave this meeting. I am also glad to inform you that on behalf of the Darbar I received this morning a cheque for Rs. 500 from the Dewan Sahib, and I also received through the Consort of His Highness the Maharaja notes valued at Rs. 300 on behalf of the Maharaja's daughter Shrimati Vilasini Devi who is at present in England. What is more, I have also received a parcel containing fairly well-spun yarn, spun by her sister Shrimati Ratnam a portion of which was spun by the Consort of the Maharaja herself. Evidently, this fact that khadi is favoured by the Maharaja's household is responsible for the favourable atmosphere that I see in Ernakulam. And I was also exceedingly pleased to learn that Christians, Hindus, Jews and we have some Jewish friends among us, and even some of the Mahommedans are favouring khadi. But I was at the same time grieved to learn that there is not the same enthusiasm and love for khadi that existed here more than two years ago. That is in my opinion wrong. We have been often charged with developing a sudden enthusiasm which vanishes suddenly. I should like you to belie that charge. And in my humble opinion khadi is pre-

eminently an activity in which sustained effort and sustained enthusiasm is necessary.

And if I could but induce you to understand the tremendous importance that khadi has to millions of starving people living in 700,000 villages in the whole of India, you will understand that enthusiasm and effort are not only necessary but indispensable. Remember the fact that it is calculated to serve not the city dwellers but millions of starving people living in the villages.

He regarded it as auspicious that instead of being assembled in front of what promises to become one of the finest harbours of Southern India, they were assembled there in the college grounds.

I propose to take this even as an earnest of the fact that the boys and girls studying in this institution are not going to neglect their starving brothers and sisters. And I know that if I can but harness the energy of the student-world, there will be no difficulty in making khadi universal in India and solving the distressful poverty of the masses. Let the boys and girls, and men and women of this beautiful State, remember that the education that the boys and girls received in big cities is got only from the toiling masses in the country. And let me just tell you that I have spread for your edification a little, very little khadi exhibition in front of me.

Here Mahatmaji exhibited some fine hand-woven and hand-spun saris and purses, some of them containing delicate embroidery. He explained that the saris were produced in Andhra Desh, and that they were such as the most fastidious lady could use. The exhibits supported, he said, not only the spinners who received from one anna to two annas a day, but also those who earned Re. 1 to Rs. 2 per day. The embroidery, he explained, was done in Bombay where a class of nearly 150 girls was being conducted under the supervision of some rich Hindu and Parsi ladies of Bombay for whom it was a labour of love. The exhibits, he said, were very much superior to the flimsy calico that many of them wore and which the ladies of Travancore and Cochin always delighted to wear. The exhibits before him were packed with the spirit of patriotism and a religious sentiment. And he or she who wore the khadi of which he had spoken placed himself or herself directly in touch with the poorest of his or her countrymen.

I want you, therefore, to consider this khadi work as a privilege and not merely as a pastime. I want the boys and girls of this institution to take to it as a gospel of love, to work in the villages.

I wish to convey my thanks to His Highness the Maharaja for extending to me the hospitality of the State, as also for the gift

that he has sent me. The only return that I can make for this kindness is to give frankly my view of some of the things that exist in this State. It is not open for a man like me to render service in any other manner. I wish therefore to refer to the same problem that engaged my attention in Travancore because I find that the problem taxes you, the people of Cochin, in the same manner as it taxes the people of Travancore. You have untouchability, unapproachability and unseeability. And it is a matter of deep grief to me to find this in a State ruled by a Hindu ruler. That untouchability should exist in these Hindu States is most regrettable.

A VOICE: It is worse here than in Travancore.

When darkness reigns supreme, where is the use of fixing the extent of that darkness? I confess that there has been great amelioration in recent years. I recognize that there is a desire on the part of His Highness and his officers to accelerate the rate of this progress. It gave me great joy to find that one member of the royal household was engaged in conducting an institution for our Pulaya brethren. But it is impossible for me to be satisfied with this progress. And I would like His Highness the Maharaja and his officials to share with me the impatience over these age-long wrongs. As a ruler of the State His Highness may measure the progress with a little foot-rule and claim satisfaction. But as a custodian of the fair name of Hindu religion, he must not perpetuate these wrongs which are corroding Hinduism. In fair weather a captain would be justified in sailing along at a moderate pace and yet hope that in proper time he would reach his port. But this barque of Hinduism is sailing essentially in cloudy and stormy weather. In common with the other religions of the world it is also in the melting pot. World eyes are centred on India's millions. They are eagerly waiting to see how we Hindus solve this question. And in this stormy weather it is suicidal to be satisfied with this slow progress. If we want to overtake the storm that is about to burst we must make the boldest effort to sail full steam ahead. It is impossible to wait and weigh in golden scale the sentiments and superstitions of the priests who have been the custodians of these for centuries. In the face of this evil which everyone seems to recognize, it is not possible to wait till these prejudices and superstitions vanish.

Mahatma Gandhi then referred to the practice in Cochin of keeping out the members of untouchable castes when the deities of temples are taken in procession along public roads as if the untouchables had not paid for the upkeep of those roads. He said:

I was both amused and pained when turning over your *Hansard*[1]. I found a defence of the practice on the ground of immemorial custom. Having been at one time a lawyer in the enjoyment of some sort of practice I brushed up my memory as to what immemorial custom was. And I have a faint recollection of having read a case in which a judge is reported to have made a cutting remark that immemorial custom should never be pleaded to commit a crime against humanity. These immemorial customs have wrung with time [*sic*]. Sin is as old as Adam himself, but I have not read a single book which says that because sin has been handed down to us from generation to generation it ought not to be interfered with. I find several other titbits in the same proceedings over the right of using the public roads. I find that the Fort is not open to *avarnas* because a temple is located there and there are schools situated near temples not open to children of all classes.

He had the pleasure of meeting two Ezhuva friends the same afternoon and he had a long discussion with them over this question. He could understand and appreciate the depth of feeling with which they spoke to him over the question. The arguments advanced were the same here, in British India, and in South Africa and they were filled with righteous indignation over the existing state of things. He said that it was the duty of the *savarna* Hindus to move the State to do elementary justice to the untouchables.

Mahatma Gandhi then referred to the institution of *Devadasis* which reflected no credit upon them. He did not know whether any sanctity was pleaded for this abominable custom.

A VOICE: There are no indigenous *Devadasis*. They are all 'imported' ones.

MAHATMAJI: Imported wines are also prohibited. (Laughter.)

Mahatmaji said that if there was one *Devadasi* in the whole State that was a disgrace to every young man.

Continuing, Mahatma Gandhi referred to the drink-trade and observed that drink was an immoral source of revenue. If they were fired by the real national or social spirit it was their own fault that there was a single drunkard among them. There were two methods of removing drunkenness, viz, (1) to carry on a ceaseless agitation for total prohibition in the State, and (2) to carry on a reform movement among those who had fallen a prey to the drink habit. Mere total prohibition was not adequate nor could mere reform movement succeed without total prohibition. The two must go side by side and no sacrifice of revenue should be considered too great. As regards revenue he

[1] The reference is to the reports of the proceedings of the Cochin Legislative Council.

said that if they could only manufacture all the khadi they required in the State itself, they could increase the earnings of the people by four times.

He concluded with an appeal to those assembled to remember his message. He wished that some of them should dedicate themselves to the khadi work or to any of the other items of work mentioned by him all of which were extremely important. He appealed to those present to contribute their mite to the Khadi Fund and volunteers who went round met with a very generous response. Mahatmaji said that ladies in Travancore and Cochin were not heavily ornamented; but he confessed, amidst roars of laughter, that he was a little jealous even of the little jewellery they wore. There were several people in the country literally starving so that they had no justification to adorn themselves with jewellery. Real beauty consisted, he said, in the purity of character, not in ornamentation.

The Hindu, 15-10-1927

89. LETTER TO W. H. PITT

ON THE TRAIN,
TRICHUR,
October 14, 1927

DEAR MR. PITT[1],

I was glad to receive your note and glad too that you overslept yourself. The morning visit would have been an unnecessary formality. Please tell Mrs. Pitt how glad I was to be able to shake hands with her.

You must have seen my speech at Alleppey. Messrs Madhavan and friends have suspended their activity and will not take any forward step without consultation with me and of course I shall do nothing without first putting myself in touch with you. May I look forward to you to set the matters at Tiruvarppu and Suchindram right? If you want me to write to the Devaswam Commissioner I would gladly do so.

It will be a graceful act now to withdraw the orders of prohibition.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 14623

[1] Commissioner of Police, Trivandrum

90. SPEECH AT TRICHUR

October 14, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for the address and for several purses that have been presented to me. I was looking forward to the pleasure of this, my second visit to Trichur and whilst I am not able to say that all my expectations of Trichur have been realized, I have seen sufficient during the day, in the course of my talks with several friends and my visit to several institutions, to fill me with hope. It gave me very great joy and pleasure to find that in these schools of Trichur, spinning had become very popular. I saw hundreds of boys and girls spinning either on the wheels or on the *takli*. But as I have said and written, this spinning must be taken with religious faith and in a service and scientific spirit. I had the pleasure of seeing the girls spinning in the institution conducted by Mrs. Swans, whose enthusiasm for the institution captivated me. But even here I miss the scientific handling of spinning. It would not matter in the slightest degree, if spinning was not at all introduced until raw cotton was available. But it is in danger of becoming very unpopular even at the hands of enthusiasts who, not knowing the technique of spinning, may mishandle it. I remember my own school days when geometry was extremely unpopular amongst the boys. The reason of its unpopularity was not in the boys but in the teacher himself. Not having a full grasp of the subject, he rattled away for all he was worth at the propositions which he drew up on the board before the boys who never followed him. Now, personally I consider that geometry is a most fascinating study and when I understood its fascination, I really could never appreciate objections that boys very often raised to that subject. But you will find if you were to go deep into such things that wherever a particular subject is uninteresting or could not be popular among the boys and girls, it is not the fault of the subject or of the boys and girls, but essentially of the teachers. But geometry which is a great science and which has thousands of votaries throughout the world is, and was in my time, in no danger of suffering harm if it happened to be handled by some idiotic teachers. But unfortunately for the toiling millions of India, hand-spinning is even now struggling for its very existence. Many economists brought up in the

European school even laugh at me when I advocate spinning as a scientific thing and a sign of beauty and art. And believing as they do, in the system of competition reigning supreme in this world as the final word on economics, they believe that spinning is merely a toy of mine, verily to be destroyed as soon as I retire from this world. You will, therefore, appreciate my great anxiety for this child, struggling for its very existence and you will forgive me if I warn you against mishandling this thing for me and I say this after a careful study of the subject since 1908; spinning is not one of the many handicrafts that boys and girls may learn or our people may take to, but it is in my opinion the central fact of the life of the starving masses of India. I have come to the conclusion that no solution of the deep and ever-deepening poverty of the masses is possible without giving hand-spinning a central place in any scheme. Whilst, therefore, I tender my congratulations to the State for countenancing hand-spinning in the manner I have seen and whilst I congratulate the boys and girls, whom I saw today, as well as the teachers, on their having taken up spinning, I must beseech the State authorities and the teachers and the boys and girls and all those who have the welfare of the State in their keeping to give this subject their very serious attention.

We are making an experiment in Ahmedabad on nearly 1,000 boys belonging to the so-called untouchables and I can claim that we have attained a very fair measure of success. The experiment is being tried under the personal supervision and care of Shrimati Anasuyabai, herself brought up in a millionaire family, but I told you that in order to achieve the measure of success that has been achieved in connection with that experiment, many experts have to give many a precious hour to its development and it was there that we came to the final conclusion that in the schools it would be wrong to introduce the spinning-wheel, but that it would be necessary to confine hand-spinning to the *takli* only. I will not go through the different processes that we tried there but I will simply give you the results of that experiment. All the boys' *taklis* are carefully examined; every boy has well-carded sliver. The hands of the boys are often likely to get moist as they are handling the *takli*; they are instructed to see to it that their hands do not get moist. Every boy's yarn is carefully kept and tested for its twines and counts and strength, and we saw that in an incredibly short space of time, the results came up to 50 per cent higher. It is also found that the average speed too increased because of this testing. Every teacher was encouraged

to learn this art by offering a small increment in his salary, if he would learn it, so that now every teacher is a good carder, and a good spinner. The testing continues up to this day. The result is altogether encouraging during the time that this experiment has been made. And we have found also by actual experience that the quantity that we so received from those boys is four or five times greater than the quantity that we were able to get from the spinning-wheels. Not because a boy sitting at the spinning-wheel would draw less than from the *takli*, but because a simultaneous spinning by all the boys at the spinning-wheel was found to be a physical impossibility. Spinning-wheels had a knack of going out of order in the hands of these mischievous youngsters times without number, and let me give out the secret to you that we found too that the boys and girls would remain boys and girls and would be mischievous. And there was no iron discipline in them not to do a little harmless mischief. But we understood that that mischief was a sign of overflowing energy. We, therefore, try to harness that mischief for this work and now we find these boys, if we were to go there, smiling away and singing away whilst they are spinning gladly and religiously for half an hour every day, and our goal is to enable every boy to spin enough during the year and more for his own requirements and something for the requirements of his family. Figures have been worked out, that if one half of the population of India were to give a portion only of its leisure hours from day to day, the whole of India can have more than enough of yarn for her requirements.

But I must not engage this great meeting with the details of hand-spinning. I simply ask you, seeing that you are conducting this very great experiment, to handle it very seriously, scientifically and skilfully. But if you are really serious and not playing at it and if you have the taste for hand-spinning that I have, or even some measure of the taste that I have, then I suggest to you that it is absolutely necessary for you to train the boys and their parents to wear khadi. You will understand me when I say that the reality of the experiment disappears immediately you acknowledge that the boys do not wear khadi. It therefore did give me pain to see, although I was scanning most carefully, that very few boys and girls that I saw at these institutions were wearing khadi. But the boys and girls are not likely to wear khadi nor are the parents likely to encourage their boys and girls unless the teachers themselves set the example. I know some very good parents, themselves inveterate smokers, trying to teach their children not to smoke. You may easily imagine the dis-

astrous results of this teaching on the part of these parents. The boys simply laugh at the teaching and smoke secretly. If, therefore, you really think as you seem to from all your talks, and all the addresses that I have received, that you have faith in the efficiency of hand-spinning for solving to a very large extent the problem of the poverty of the masses, it behoves you seriously to adopt khadi yourselves, and fill the atmosphere with the khadi spirit and the spinning-wheel.

In this State where boys and girls are receiving so much education and boys and girls derived from all classes, Christians and Hindus and all others, who are in this State, it is really a very easy thing for you to make this beautiful State self-supporting, so far as its clothing requirements are concerned. We have it on the authority of Sir Dinshaw Wachha that the average clothing requirements of India are nearly 13 yards per year per head. I, therefore, calculate Rs. 4 for that quantity of cloth per head. You have to multiply the number of the population in the State and find out for yourselves what a vast sum you can save from year to year in the aggregate and that brings me immediately to the cursed drink problem.

It is amazing to me that where there is spread so much education, where there are so many educational institutions, where there are so many Christians and Hindus, that this great evil is tolerated. If we really thought, as we should think, all the people in this land as our own blood brothers and sisters, this evil should not be allowed to exist for one single day. Can we contemplate with equanimity the terrible fact that our children depend for their education upon this immoral source of revenue to a large extent? I have heard from so many mouths the financial difficulty mentioned in achieving this reform of necessary total prohibition. I have presented you with a ready-made solution for that difficulty in the shape of the spinning-wheel. It is really the bounden duty of all of you to eradicate this evil by every legitimate means at your disposal, and if I talk in this strain of the drink evil, what am I to say about the evil of untouchability which appears in this fair land in the extreme and odious forms of unapproachability and unseeability?

I know that the State has done a great deal to help these so-called untouchables. I was delighted to find that a member of the royal house was looking after a Pulaya colony and that this colony received a substantial grant from the public purse. It was a joy to me to see the Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in a neighbouring place who is in charge of such a colony and which re-

ceives State aid to the extent of Rs. 300 or Rs. 400 a year. And I was equally delighted to understand from the Director of Public Instruction, with whom I had the pleasure of a heart-to-heart conversation, that nearly 50 per cent of the boys learning in the schools of this State belong to this untouchable class.[1] I thank you for the correction. I understand now that it is not 50 per cent of the boys who are studying in the schools, but 50 per cent [of boys] of the school-going age amongst the depressed or the untouchable classes. Even this statement, whilst not as satisfactory as the one I had made to you, is also satisfactory. And I would like to say, in parenthesis, that seeing that these boys, and girls also I expect, who have been so long neglected require special handling, and as they study in the ordinary schools of the State and very rightly so, the educational syllabus itself needs, in my humble opinion, overhauling. But whilst I tender my congratulations to the State and the people of this State upon the progress that has been made in this direction, I must confess to you my feeling that great as this progress may appear otherwise, with regard to the enormity of the evil that has spread into Hinduism even this progress is still insignificant. If we are to do enough penance for the sin we have committed before man and God, in treating a class of human beings, as good as ourselves, as untouchables, the rate of progress has to be much quicker than it has been. I had a graphic but painful description given to me by the Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. of the condition of the Nayadis. I must not take up your time by describing in detail the painful conversation. Probably you know much better than I do the wrong upon wrong that we Hindus have heaped upon our own kith and kin and that wrong can only be somewhat washed away when we rise in indignation against ourselves and wipe out the evil. I know the argument that is advanced always in favour of patience and advanced also in favour of prejudices, however sinful that prejudice may be, but having seen the condition of these classes from one end of India to the other, I can only say to you that by talking in this fashion of philosophers about the progress and conditions of progress, we are getting tired. For me this question of removal of untouchability to the core is the acid test of Hinduism. Though the problem is capable of yielding either way enormous political and economic results, it is to me pre-eminently a religious question. It is

[1] Here Rao Saheb Mathai, the Director, intervened briefly to correct Gandhiji's statistics.

a question of self-purification for the *savarna* Hindus. I, therefore, feel that we are not doing our duty by these people when we talk of doing these things in easy stages. I would not be satisfied unless every one of us became a missionary for taking a ray of hope and comfort into the desolate homes of these people. You will, therefore, understand why I feel deeply hurt to find that on certain occasions when these people pass through public streets they are pushed away, that schools which may be in the precincts of temples are not open to the children of this class. I myself find it impossible to reconcile the prohibition orders against the entry of these men and women into our temples. To me it is not a place fit to live in where we have the impertinence to consider that God Himself can be defiled by the approach of His own creature. That temple from which a single human being is debarred, because of his being born in a particular sect, for me, ceases to be a temple itself. I, therefore, appeal to every one of you with all the earnestness and force at my command to do your duty valiantly by the people.

There is another evil also, which is corrupting society. I have a printed open letter, signed by some friends whose names I do not know and some I could not decipher, in connection with the *Devadasi* institution. Enclosed with that letter was a petition addressed to His Highness the Maharaja. This petition makes a painful reading. It describes how a few *Devadasis*, having been, in the first instance, brought into the State, have now developed into a growing institution. I do not know how far the statements made in that petition can be borne out, but all I know is that it is a well-reasoned petition from responsible quarters. It bears *prima facie* marks of credibility and that petition contains the statement that girls born of *Devadasis* and girls also adopted from other classes by *Devadasis* are actually, in the name of God, dedicated for purposes too awful to contemplate. The petition mentions a whole class of people who disgrace themselves and India by making use for unlawful purposes of these girls of tender age. I do not know how far it is possible for you to contradict the statements made in this petition. But it is for you, those who are leaders of public opinion in this State, those who are capable of moulding public opinion in this State, to study this petition. You will find that there is substantial ground for the complaints made in this petition. You should try to deal with this problem in a serious manner. The petition alludes with gratitude, and I think, very properly too, to the resolution of the Mysore Government taken as early as 1909, in order to deal with this great evil which was in

existence there at that time. I venture to think that it is a resolution worth copying by this State. It gives elementary justice to these unfortunate sisters of ours. You may also know perhaps that there is at the present moment a Bill being promoted by the lady member of the Madras Legislative Council on the same models, somewhat after the style of the Mysore resolution. The petition gives convincing reasons for the adoption of that resolution. I commend to all of you a serious study of this delicate question.

And that brings me to the students, both boys and girls, from whom I received the address and whom I saw this afternoon. It has been a matter of the greatest joy and comfort to me to find that I possess the confidence of thousands of students throughout the length and breadth of this land and I assure you it is the daily prayer going out from the bottom of my heart to the Maker of us all, that He may make me worthy of that confidence. I wish that I had ample time at my disposal to open out my heart to the students, boys and girls at this meeting. I know that I may never see you again in this life but my heart is always with you.

I have always felt that our education is imperfect and incomplete in a variety of ways. You have yourselves, in your address expressed the same opinion and you have expressed the ideal hope that my having come in your midst would set matters right in the matter of education. I wish that there was warrant for that hope. The alteration of the educational scheme is very important and from one end of the country to the other it is a tremendous problem. I have often written on it and some of the students of mature age are probably familiar with my views. I assume that they have not undergone the slightest change and with the march of time the intensity of my convictions has grown. But that is a solution which I dare not even discuss with you at the present moment. It rests with the educationists of the country and more than that it rests really on so many circumstances over which not even they have any control. And in speaking, therefore, to the boys and girls I have adopted a method which is easier of adoption and which is capable of being adopted by them without the slightest change in the present curriculum. Rightly or wrongly it is claimed by all educationists that education should be only secular.

Personally I have always dissented emphatically from that view but things being as they are it is necessary at some stage or other for the students to receive some religious consolation, some religious instruction. Unfortunately the homes of those parents who send their boys to these schools have practically broken up.

They have neither the fitness nor the willingness to give this necessary instruction to their boys and girls. That religious and moral atmosphere which we hope and believe at one time surrounded every home and hamlet in India is today conspicuous by its absence, but thank God that students need not feel helpless. If you have as every one of us ought to have the religious and moral impulse within us, it is possible to give ourselves the necessary training.

Let us understand what is meant by religious and moral instruction. In other words, it is nothing but character-building and every boy and every girl knows instinctively what character is. It needs no parental instruction, no priestly instruction to tell you that there is a God. Without that indispensable faith, in my opinion, building of character is an impossibility. It is the foundation of character. So I say to the boys and girls, "Never lose faith in God and therefore in yourselves and remember that if you allow refuge to a single evil thought, a single sinful thought, you know at once that you lose that faith." Untruthfulness, uncharitableness and violence—all those things are strangers absolutely to that faith. Remember that we have in this world no enemy greater than ourselves. The *Bhagavad Gita* proclaims it in almost every verse. If I was to sum up the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount I find the same answer; my reading of the Koran has led me to the same irresistible conclusion. No one can harm us so much as we can harm ourselves. If you are, therefore, brave boys and brave girls you will fight desperately and valiantly against the whole of this group of evil thoughts. No sinful act was ever done on this earth without the prompting of a sinful thought. You have therefore to exercise vigilance over every thought growing up in your breast. Many students, both boys and girls, have often asked me or told me that whilst they understand with their intelligence the cause of such remarks that I have just now made to you, they find it impossible in practice to control their thoughts and drive them away. Thus they give up the struggle and give way to despair. Except for perfect beings, surely evil thoughts will arise some time or other in every breast. Hence the necessity for incessant prayer to God to keep us from sin; that is one process which does not do harm. The other process is actually welcoming evil thoughts when they come. That is the most dangerous and harmful process and it is that process against which I invite you to fight with all your might and if you think of what I am saying, you will immediately discover that this really is the easiest thing to do. For every one of

us can make up our choice as to the guests that we are to invite or encourage in our own breast. We may not be able to help the onslaught of the enemy but it is given to every one of us to die in the attempt to repel the onslaught. I suggest to you to take this home with you and see whether you do not, day after day, become successful in this strife. And there is another thing also along this line which I want to tell you and it is this.

If we will not think of ourselves but think of those who are less fortunate when compared with ourselves we shall find that we have no leisure whatsoever for harbouring evil thoughts. Hence I have invited every boy and girl to set apart at least half an hour to think of the poor millions. I have asked you to regard yourselves as trustees for these millions of population. I have asked you to establish a living bond which binds yourselves with these and if you uphold this you will find that you are always occupied and are always not at home to receive these unwelcome visitors. I tell you from my own experience and the experience also of many of my comrades how this one thought of incessantly working for India's poor millions keeps me and them from all harm. That is the spiritual secret of the spinning-wheel, but I do not care if the spinning-wheel does not appeal to you. All I suggest to you is that you must establish a living bond between yourselves and these paupers and you will find immediately that you have laid this surest foundation for building up your character. May God help you to understand what I have told you, may He give you the power to act up to it.

The Hindu, 17-10-1927

91. CONVERSATION WITH DEPRESSED CLASSES' DEPUTATIONS

October 15, 1927

Mahatmaji insisted on receiving both the deputations[1] together, as by so doing the Cherumas and the Ezhuvas would be brought together in the same hall.

Mr. P. C. Gopalan explained the grievances of the Ezhuvas in not being allowed to pass through Agraharam streets.

Mahatmaji enquired whether the restriction remained only for the festival days or on all the days of the year. Mr. Gopalan answered the restriction remained throughout the year in the Agraharam roads. . . .

Regarding an enquiry from Mahatmaji Mr. C. Seshayya informed him that the admission of the Depressed Classes into the ordinary schools was a pious hope which existed on paper only.

Mr. Raghava Menon informed Mahatmaji that on account of the various social disabilities heaped on the Ezhuvas by the higher castes, some of the Ezhuvas had gone over to Christianity and Islam. But a check has been placed on such defections from Hinduism by the efforts of the Arya Samaj who have obtained a ruling from the Madras High Court that on public streets vested in a municipality all members of the public have equal rights and that one section of the community cannot interdict another section from the lawful use of the public streets.

Mahatmaji opined that the same problem existed everywhere in Kerala and so public conscience must be aroused.

Mr. P. C. Gopalan wished to know from Mahatmaji that, since all religions are equal, the Ezhuvas wished to know if they could embrace other religions to obtain redress of their wrongs.

Mahatmaji said that they must not leave the Hindu religion but must fight the cause with all reasonable force. If only they knew the utility of Hinduism the persecution of the so-called higher castes was nothing.

Mr. Chamiappan informed Mahatmaji that the majority of the Ezhuvas did not want conversion to other faiths, excepting a few. Their lands were in the ownership of the higher castes and that was the reason they were afraid to fight.

Mahatmaji said that if all of them were of one mind and with discipline and courage, they could win their social freedom.

[1] Of the Depressed Classes Mission led by C. Seshayya and the Ezhuvas led by T. M. Chamiappan, Sukumaran and P. C. Gopalan

Mr. Chamiappan brought to the notice of Mahatmaji that Congressmen themselves were not helping them in the struggle, let alone the general public. . . .

Mahatmaji said certainly he would talk to the Congressmen on that, but whether they would accept his advice or not he could not say. He added that some were Congressmen only in name.

Mr. Seshayya stated that . . . the ambition of the Cherumas was not temple entry but only to pass along public roads.

MAHATMAJI: Why not temple entry also? The question was a difficult one all over Malabar.

Mr. P. C. Gopalan wanted to know if the Ezhuvas could put up a tough fight, by using violence, meaning assault for assault.

Mahatmaji deprecated violence. As for him he would not file a complaint in a court, but the Ezhuvas, if they chose, could. There was the Hindu Maha Sabha to which body they could appeal. Violence would spoil their cause. Satyagraha was a complete substitute for violence.

Mr. Gopalan submitted to Mahatmaji that the salvation of his community either lay in conversion to other faiths or non-participation in the fight for swaraj. Mr. Gopalan wished to know if there was any hope of having a purified Hinduism.

MAHATMAJI: Oh yes. Otherwise I would not be a Hindu and could not live.

In reply to another question whether Ezhuvas could join the Arya Samaj or Brahmo Samaj, Mahatmaji answered that they could do so if they wanted.

Then Mahatmaji enquired why a large number present there did not wear khadi. Mr. Chamiappan stated that Government was their only support for the moment in this social struggle and reminded him of the recent Government order against subscribing to the Khadi Fund and as such they did not wish to alienate that only support and sympathy. He appealed to Mahatma Gandhi to help them in their struggle.

Mahatma Gandhi promised to do his best. He informed his hearers that he was soon to lay aside khadi work to take up the solution of untouchability. He thanked them for having waited in deputations. He was just going to Sabari Ashram—where the removal of untouchability was going on—and thence on a visit to His Holiness Shri Shankaracharya of Kumbakonam Mutt, to have an interview, with a view to convert the Swamiji, if he could, to his view in the matter of the removal of untouchability.[1]

The Hindu, 17-10-1927

[1] *The Hindu* report adds: "Mahatmaji and party motored to the Nellichery village. Here he was met and received by Shri Shankaracharya of the Kama-

92. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PALGHAT

October 15, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for your addresses and the several purses. As you are aware, this is not my first visit to Palghat. I have vivid recollections of your kindness when I was here last. I am glad that the Taluk Board is devoting some of its attention to the spinning-wheel. I hope you will organize spinning in all your schools in a scientific manner. I had occasion yesterday in Trichur to see a number, nearly four or five hundred, of boys and girls spinning. They belong to two high schools. Whilst I cannot say that the spinning was high-class spinning it was nevertheless an ennobling sight. But the pleasure of it was marred by the anomaly that the majority of the boys and girls, whilst they were spinning, were dressed in foreign cloth and not in khaddar. I hope that the same anomaly does not exist in your schools. It is necessary to understand the implications of the spinning-wheel. All the spinning that our boys and girls may do or even the millions of somewhat starved villagers may do, will be, you can easily realize, of no avail whatsoever, if we do not make use of the khadi to be produced from the yarn so spun. If then you really endorse, as you seem to do, the message of the spinning-wheel, I would respectfully ask you to be true to it and adopt khadi for yourselves. Wherever I have gone throughout this tour I have found a hearty endorsement of this message; but a lip profession accompanied even by a solid purse will not relieve the distress of famishing millions in our 7,00,000 villages, unless we are prepared to wear khadi.

You have in your midst here an ashram, called Sabari Ashram. It was from this Sabari Ashram that I received this beautiful piece of khadi, where yarn is spun by the little boys whom I saw there and woven also by their little hands. I call it beautiful not because it is as fine or as soft as the calico that you are wearing. But I call it beautiful because of the history

koti Peetham, Kumbakonam Mutt. There was a heart-to-heart talk between the two great men. The interview lasted some 30 minutes and was strictly private." For a report of the meeting between Gandhiji and the Shankaracharya, *Vide* Appendix IV.

and the romance behind it. This piece of khadi puts you in touch at once with those boys and with the millions of villagers. It is even beautiful because of the significance that attaches to it. If a corpse was painted by the greatest painter and presented to us as a specimen of beautiful art, we would not touch it but we would shrink with horror from it. We fall down at the feet of our own mothers irrespective of whether her form is considered beautiful or not. For every one of us, I hope, there is no woman more beautiful than our own mother. The beauty comes then from the association which it carries with it. At the end of the meeting I shall test the sense of your beauty by offering this cloth to you. You may have seen, some of you at least, in the papers that in Chettinad, for a small piece of khadi, which was in reality exceedingly finer than this coarse khadi, I got Rs. 1,000 because it was prepared locally by a self-sacrificing artist and because it was woven also in the same place Devakottah.

I have a purse from the Viswabharati Reading Room that is being conducted in Palghat and a proposal has been received by me that I should formally declare open the khaddar depot which the people associated with the Reading Room want me to open. I do so with great pleasure and I hope that it will receive the encouragement that it deserves from you all. I have got some khadi also from this depot which, if you can preserve the silence that prevails just now, at the end of the meeting it will be open for you to have. But pleasant though everything that I can say about khadi is to me, I must hasten to enter a subject which has been engrossing my attention throughout the Kerala tour.

I refer to the evil of untouchability known here in its extreme form, even of unapproachability and invisibility. It has been a matter always of deep grief to me whenever I have come to Kerala to find that in a land so beautiful, almost unrivalled for its beauty in all India, there should be this untouchability in all its hideous forms. I had a long and serious discussion with a deputation from friends belonging to the Ezhuva and Cheruma communities. I offer no apology for not knowing these intricate sub-divisions. It is enough for me to know that this is a hydra-headed monster. I assure you it gives me no pleasure whatsoever to understand all these kinds of gradations in untouchability that are prevalent here. When I hear of all this graded untouchability I feel deeply humiliated and ashamed. To add to my grief I had today an ocular demonstration of a thing, which I shall not be able to easily forget.

As soon as I arrived in Palghat, I heard a shrill voice in the

neighbourhood of the house where I have been accommodated. In my innocence I thought that as this was a business centre this was the sound of some labourers working in a factory in order to ease themselves of the burden of carrying heavy loads as I am used to in Ahmedabad and Bombay. Within an hour after we reached Palghat, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari came to me and asked me whether I was hearing any strange sounds. I told him, yes. And he straightway asked me whether I knew what it was. He told me that that was the voice of a Nayadi and he added that that was the sign that a Nayadi at a distance was begging. I asked him how far he could be. On hearing that he was within a stone's throw I hastened out to see who this man could be who was making all that sound. Well, you all know where I could have found him. He was not walking along the road, but he was at some distance from the hedge that guarded the road. I asked him to come near and he came near but not at the roadside of the hedge and told me that he dared not come on the roadside. He added that he never walked along the roads of Palghat. The rest of the story of this miserable case I don't need to recite to you.

The man certainly did not look starved; but that to me was no matter for compliment to the Hindus. It was to me a sign of contempt, of degraded conscience shown by flinging a handful of rice in the face of this man whom we refuse to recognize as a human being and as a blood-brother. In flinging rice in the face of these people in the manner we do on Saturdays and Wednesdays of the week, in my humble opinion, we not only degrade human beings but also we put a premium on begging. I don't think that the virtue of charity demands that we should give meals, or food or money to men who are able-bodied, who have got two strong arms and legs as this man has. When I asked this man whether he would take up some steady labour and could put by this profession of begging, he told me that he could not do so unless he had consulted his brethren. I leave it to you, everyone who has got intelligence enough, to work out the frightful results and consequences of this wrong. Some of the results of this kind of charity we are already suffering from in this poor country of ours. Two hours after this humiliating spectacle I had the pleasure of receiving the friends I had already referred to.

Some of them were as learned as the most learned amongst you. I could find no difference whatsoever between them and the tallest in this assembly and yet their addresses unfolded a tale of wrong which is enough to shame every one of us. They cannot go along some roads, public roads, although they are as much

taxpayers as any of you, simply because they are classed as untouchables. Temple entry is an unthinkable thing. Some of them cannot walk along any road whatsoever and on the analogy of what the *savarna* Hindus have done, they have amongst themselves also, as I remarked before, gradations of untouchability. They appealed to me for help and I wish that it was in my power to give them the help that I should like to. For, as a Hindu I feel that I am a participator in the crime that we have done against them. I wish that I could convince the men and women who may be here that this is a terrible wrong we are doing to them, to ourselves and to our own faith. I wish I had the power to convince you that there is absolutely no warrant for such untouchability as we practise today in Hinduism. My whole Hindu soul rises in rebellion against this hideous wrong. I have searched our books in vain for any mention of Ezhuvas, Pulayas, Nayadis and what not. I have asked learned men here in Travancore and elsewhere in all humility to teach me how these men can be classed as untouchables and on what authority. I tell you that there is absolutely no authority whatsoever for all these terrible deeds except that of custom. But nobody as yet had the hardihood to tell me that this immoral custom carried any religious sanction with it. If we were not too lazy to think out these problems for ourselves, if we had not surrendered our reason to superstition, we could remove this evil in the twinkling of an eye. I have found no warrant in Hinduism or in any religion or in any system of philosophy for the arrogation of superiority by one class of men over another. If we harbour this doctrine of inequality in our breast it ill becomes us to think of swaraj. We talk with our lips in a most learned manner of democratic institutions but in our heart of hearts we deny to others the elementary rights we propose with our lips. I ask all the learned men, all those who have the welfare of Hindus and Hinduism in their hearts to wake up betimes and deal a death-blow to this great demon. If you are nationalists and feel for the country and therefore feel for the lowest of our countrymen, go down to their haunts where the Nayadis and the Pulayas and all those men, miscalled untouchables, are living and give your whole life to their amelioration.

I was pained when these friends of the two deputations informed me that there were even some of the Congressmen who believed in untouchability and kept these men at a great distance. I should like to find that these men have been misinformed and that that charge cannot be sustained. But if there

are any Congressmen who harbour untouchability in their hearts, as a Congressman expected to know something of the Congress creed and the Congress resolutions, I beg to inform you that such Congressmen should resign their membership. They should understand that the removal of untouchability is an integral part of the Swaraj Resolution that was taken up by the Congress at its first session under the new constitution. In my opinion that resolution has almost the sanctity of the Congress creed. To be true to the nation, to the Congress and to be true to ourselves, if we do not believe in the removal of untouchability it is open to us to challenge the Congress creed, to challenge that resolution or to move for its removal. You cannot be truthful if you harbour untouchability and still be a party to the resolution on untouchability. But I have put before you after all only a miserable, worldly view of a thing which does not admit of playing with. What does it matter whether you are a Congressman or no Congressman? Is it not your duty—those who are Hindus—to give due consideration to this great question and examine it in its religious significance? I regard the removal of this evil as really an acid test of Hinduism. In my own humble opinion the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question, the Hindu-Muslim question and so many other questions that afflict us today are but phases of this untouchability question.

If we, whom God has blessed with intelligence and privileges, would only understand that we are but servants of the lowest and poorest among our countrymen, all these questions that have arisen in our midst would disappear in a moment. It is impossible in the face of the great mass awakening that has taken place in this land, as all over the world, to sustain arrogance, insolence and superiority for one single moment.

I have turned myself inside out whether there can be any reasonable justification for all the wrongs from which these friends are suffering and I tell you I have not discovered a single justification. But I must not take up any more of your time. I only pray God that He may open the eyes of your understanding, that He may awaken your conscience and that He may bless you with power to go out into the midst of the people and bring them the solution and relief that they deserve.

I thank you for the great patience with which you have listened to me.

The Hindu, 18-10-1927

93. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, COIMBATORE

October 16, 1927

SISTERS,

If you don't stop that noise I can't talk to you. I thank you for the purse you have given me. There are only one or two things I want to talk to you. We all want *Ramarajya* in India. You can't get *Ramarajya* in India if you can't live like Sita. Sita was pure in heart and pure in body. I think and it is my opinion, that most of you, the vast majority of you, defile your body with foreign cloth. Not so did Sita Devi. Don't suppose for one moment that Sita Devi went in for or sent for foreign finery to decorate her body. On the contrary, we know that in Sita Devi's time, Sita Devi and all the women of India sat spinning and wore cloth woven by the men of India. And that was beautiful. There is enough in our ancient books to show that women without exception span in those times with their own hands and that we made all the cloth we needed. The books tell us that in those days India's millions in villages and towns ate well and clothed themselves sufficiently. But you deck your bodies with foreign saris, while millions of our women are starving in our villages. I know that men, no less than women, are guilty of this. I know that Indian men initiated this habit of wearing foreign cloth. The fruit of this has been that men and women in the villages are daily becoming poorer and daily descending into deepening distress. Like Sita Devi, think day by day of the poor brothers and sisters of India. When you think of them I am sure that you will think it your duty to wear the khadi woven by their sacred hands. I will tell you another thing that Sita Devi did. She did not consider a single human being as untouchable. She and the great Rama willingly and gratefully accepted the services of Nishadaraja, who according to our false notions of today would be considered untouchable. Bharata, the great brother of Rama, embraced Nishadaraja warmly when Bharata observed that he had served Rama with devotion. You know Bharata, the king of *rishis* and sannyasis. Today we consider those who serve us, till our fields and clean our closets, as not fit to be touched by us. I tell you that it is not religion, but irreligion. And I wish that you should get rid of this stain of untouchability.

The third thing I want to talk to you about is *Devadasis*. Friends, I understand there are some of these sisters here. I consider the occupation of *Devadasis* to be immoral. They ought not to be found in that occupation. I see you have got your women's club or association. It is your first duty to look after these unfortunate sisters. If you band yourselves together and carry on an agitation in this matter, you can compel the men and women of Coimbatore into doing their duty in this regard.

You must take into your hands reforms of this character. You have heard the name of Dr. Muthulakshmi of Madras. She is your representative in the Madras Legislative Council. She is even its Deputy President. I had a long chat with her. Her view is, and others also think, that it is now high time to combat this serious evil of Hindu society. You here should do likewise.

There is another evil I should like to speak to you about. You give away your daughters in marriage before they can know what marriage can be. Do not get them married before they reach a ripe age, at least before they attain the age of 16. I tell you that it is a sin to do so.

I have with me in Ahmedabad girls more than 16 years old and unmarried. They are as innocent as flowers in your home. They spend their time in doing many acts of service for society. They receive proper education there. They are not going to be married, unless they themselves desire it. Do not for one moment consider that this is not your work, but men's work. This is especially your work for the women. Wake up and work for the happiness of the girls. The men cannot do it and won't do it.

To realize the truth I have told you, you need not go to colleges or read a single line. You can easily understand all this. This is what I call human education, what all women can achieve without knowing a single letter of the alphabet.

Now I must tell you, I am not satisfied with your purse. I can tell you what your sisters, the ladies of other districts, did for the movement. Malabar girls do not wear much jewellery like yourselves. Heavy jewellery I see only in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Desha. Malabar ladies parted with even the single bracelets, rings, etc., they wore for the khadi movement. And it is my standing request to them not to molest their husbands or disturb their parents for fresh jewellery to replace the jewels donated. If you feel for your poor sisters and if you like to, I would ask you to surrender your jewels for their sake. Gifts must be absolutely voluntary and willingly given.

Remember that the beauty of a woman does not consist in the beauty of her clothes and jewellery but in the purity of her heart. Whether you give me your jewellery or not, is a minor matter. But I do want you to bear the truths, that I have just told you, in mind. And I tell you from my experience that the desire for wearing much jewellery does no good. Husbands often ask me to advise you to revise your notions of jewellery and finery. I am free to tell you that there are husbands who have assured me that the wives who came to be influenced by my teachings, themselves rejoiced for such influence.

May God, through you, bless our land.

The Hindu, 19-10-1927

94. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, COIMBATORE*

October 16, 1927

I thank you all for the presents and addresses that you have given me. I am sure you do not want me to mention the names of the bodies who have presented the addresses or of the donors and their gifts. What is given for the sake of *Daridranarayana* needs no mention. I may inform you that I have read very carefully all the translations that have been given to me of the addresses or their originals.

I will take up first of all the municipal address. My sincere thanks are due to the Municipality for not only expressing their sentiments frankly, courteously and firmly but also for reminding me of the address which the Municipality gave me when I paid my last visit to Coimbatore. Throughout my life I have gained more from my critic friends than my admirers, especially when the criticism was made in courteous and friendly language as the present one is. The first address I had the honour of receiving from this Municipality told me or rather questioned the utility of non-co-operation, especially regarding schools and public services. Many important, and some of them painful, events have happened since the birth of non-co-operation. I had two years of prayerful contemplation over the advice that I tendered the country for the first time in 1921. I have read and read with careful attention and open mind almost everything that has been written against non-co-operation and as a result of my observation I am able to inform you that not only have I not changed the views that I held in 1921 and that I expressed when I had the honour

of meeting you last but have been confirmed more and more in those views. It is my humble opinion that, within the last two generations, our country has not gained as much as it has gained since the advent of non-violent non-co-operation. I entertain no doubt whatever as to the verdict of history over non-violent non-co-operation. It is also my certain belief that every student who left his school or college or every government servant who left what passes for public services has gained immeasurably and lost nothing by having done so. That public services in spite of non-co-operation have not been abandoned, that Government schools have not been abandoned by our boys is no demonstration whatsoever of the failure of my doctrine, even as, because men and women are not all votaries of truth, truth cannot be challenged as to its efficacy or soundness; but I want to go a step further and tell you that he who wishes to study carefully and impartially current events will find ample testimony that several Government servants who left their jobs and several students who left their schools are giving a good account of themselves.

Is it a small thing that millions of people rose to a man, as if by magic, one fine morning under the spell of non-co-operation? If co-operation is a duty I hold that non-co-operation also, under certain conditions, is equally a duty. I go further and contend that if this country of ours is to gain its freedom by non-violent means, there is no other means open but for them some day to take up non-co-operation. Believe me that if today I do not talk of non-violent non-co-operation it is not because my faith is not burning as brightly as ever but because as a practical man I do not find the atmosphere for working out that creed. I must not weary you with my arguments about my belief.

The present address of the Municipality in courteous but firm language enters a protest against the views that I have been expressing about varnashrama dharma. The signatories or framers of the address seem to regard varnashrama dharma as an unmitigated evil. I venture to reaffirm my belief that varnashrama dharma is not only not an unmitigated evil but it is one of the foundations on which Hinduism is built. In my humble opinion the framers of the address have mistaken the shadow for the substance. Instead of making, as I humbly believe, this serious blunder if they invited me to join them in a crusade against the travesty that passes for varnashrama dharma, they would have found me enrolling myself as a volunteer under their banners. I hold it as a law of our being and, whether we know such laws of our being or whether we do not, we have to obey them even as

our forefathers obeyed the law of gravitation before it was discovered by a master mind. Nature's laws are inexorable. We may not disobey them and escape punishment. The conviction is daily forcing itself upon me that this India of ours and the rest of the world are suffering because of our breach of the law of varnashrama dharma. If Hinduism today seems to me to be in a fallen state it is not because of Varnashrama dharma but because of the wilful disobedience of that dharma. varnashrama dharma defines man's mission on this earth. He is born day after day not to explore avenues for amassing riches and to explore different means of livelihood; on the contrary, man is born in order that he may utilize every atom of his energy for the purpose of knowing his Maker. It restricts him therefore for the purpose of holding body and soul together to the occupation of his forefathers. That and nothing more or nothing less is varnashrama dharma and it is not possible nor desirable nor necessary that I should ignore that dharma because the majority of Hindus seem to deny it in their lives. Thus conceded, varnashrama dharma has nothing in common with castes as we know them today. That dharma therefore can never mean and has never tolerated untouchability. That dharma therefore has no idea of superiority or inferiority. Because many people, millions of people, take the name of God in vain and even insult God and man in the name of God Himself, shall we disown our God and find another name for Him? I therefore invite respectfully the framers of the address and the audience to join me in a crusade against the spectre of castes and the curse of untouchability and I promise that if you join me in this crusade you will find at the end of it that there is nothing to fight against in Hinduism. I have been prayerfully studying the great non-Brahmin and Brahmin question which has been agitating so many able men in the South and I am daily driven to the conclusion that the question, in so far as it is a non-Brahmin question, is a phase of the battle against untouchability.

Let me then come to the address of the *Adi-Dravida* friends. Ever since my entry into Travancore this question has been engrossing my attention in some shape or another. To the *Adi-Dravida* friends I may give the assurance that all my attention is given to the solution of that question. I have been recently delighting myself in describing myself as a Nayadi and it is my regret that I have not had the courage to refuse the hospitality of Mr. R. K. Shanmugam Chettiar in his palatial house and go straight to the Nayadis and share their hospitality and live among them. But I wish to give this assurance to the *Adi-Dravida*

friends that this curse of untouchability is fast going. It is true that the temple gates are not flung open to admit them. It is still too true that certain roads are barred against them. It is still too true that both untouchability and unseeability still exist in their hideous forms. But I also know that public opinion is daily gathering force against this insufferable evil and it is my conviction that much earlier than any of us imagine this evil is going to be blotted out of Hinduism.

There is, however, one telling paragraph in the address of the *Adi-Dravida* friends and the paragraph is so important that I should like to read it out to you.

> The Government tempts our young men by locating liquor shops in or near our *cherries*—the living quarters of our community. If industrial institutions took the place of such shops and if social workers befriended us instead of *abkari* contractors, we have no doubt that our progress can be assured in a very short time. We therefore very earnestly appeal to you for help to organize industrial schools in or near our living quarters to save our community from ruin.

This paragraph gives us all food for reflection. To repeat what I said this afternoon, in spite of solid efforts put forth by so many members, the Government rejects the advice of the Municipality to close a few of the liquor shops within the limits of the Municipality. For me it is a first-class tragedy that such a simple proposition should have been shelved by the Government. I associate myself whole-heartedly with the paragraph I have just read out to you on behalf of the *Adi-Dravidas* and I wish you, the citizens of Coimbatore, will take up battle on behalf of all those who are given to the vice and rid your city of the curse of drink. I wish also that there would be some young men and women coming forward as volunteers to take the challenge of *Adi-Dravida* friends and start industrial schools for them instead of driving them to drink.

I now take up the Congress address. The Congress address invites me to take the lead again. Evidently they still have a lingering faith in the programme of 1920. Let them understand that I have never given up the lead. I am still wooing, but what shall I do if I do not find followers. But there is a better answer than I had given you. Let me tell you what I mean by leading. I made statements even before I went to jail that the only lead that could be given to the country by a man with non-violence as his creed is to pursue the constructive programme of the Congress. The most effective programme of the Congress is

the message of the spinning-wheel and with the consent and permission of the Congress duly given to me, I am leading in that constructive programme as President of the All-India Spinners' Association. And the Spinners' Association is the creature of the Congress, a creature that works by dint of perseverance and systematic efforts to absorb the creator himself. Those who have real belief in the efficacy of non-violence for obtaining the freedom of their country cannot but believe in khaddar and put their shoulder to the wheel so that it may become universal in this country. They should talk of no other creed before this becomes an accomplished fact. If anyone asks me for a lead and ignores the lead I am really giving, I really wonder whether the questioner has understood the implication of the struggle of non-violence. Remember that the Spinners' Association which is designed to serve 300 millions of people, including the poorest, invokes and requires the greatest administrative skill and the widest possible platform. Remember that it requires for its success on the part of the workers ceaseless watch, ceaseless perseverance, indomitable faith in the face of sneers, in the face of opposition, in the face of malicious misrepresentations. It requires, on the part of the workers, an amount of sacrifice, unexciting and sustained beyond compare and if God helps India to run an organization of this character and carry it to the remotest village, we can imagine that with that one thing accomplished very little will remain to be done to make this land free. I have a growing faith in the capacity of India to respond to these efforts and whether you share my views about non-co-operation, varnashrama dharma and many other things in which I dabble, I ask you all to work for *Daridranarayana.*

Last but not the least to be mentioned are our own unfortunate sisters, the *Devadasis.* I understand that they are to be found even in your midst. Some of them were present at the women's meeting this afternoon. It reflects no credit upon our religion or on our country. A Bill is pending before the Legislative Council sponsored by Dr. Muthulakshmi Ammal. It has been framed, so far as I can see, on the Mysore model. That enlightened State dealt with this question so long ago as 1909. I suggest two things before this is done. Let these young men or old men who are making unlawful use of these dear sisters refrain from making them the object of their lust. Secondly, let everyone join in the crusade against the existence of this system, whether it is by legislation or by creating an active enlightened public opinion against this evil.

You will pardon me if I have tired you out. All your ad-

dresses are serious and I felt that if I was to be courteous I should return as full an answer as I could possibly make. I ask you to consider the things that I have told you and to act according to whatever would commend itself.

The Hindu, 18-10-1927

95. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 17, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I have received all your letters. During the last week after the Monday letter I have not written to you so far as I can remember. It has been a perfect rush in Travancore and Malabar and an anxious time, all of my own making and seeking. I therefore needed rest. As soon as I mentioned the fact, Rajagopalachari cancelled three places and also his own Ashram where I was eager to go. But as I want to be fresh for Ceylon where I have promised myself a strenuous time I have reconciled myself to the cancellation. Needless to say there is nothing wrong with me. The rest is a mere precautionary measure. On 21st I move to Tiruppur which I leave on 24th night. The rest of the programme stands. The places to visit near Mangalore I do not know as yet. So you will write your letters to Mangalore to reach between 26 and 31st.

There should be no hurry about the hair cutting. I want you to carry the ladies with you. I have much hope of your becoming a powerful influence among them. You must not therefore unnecessarily become a strange creature to them. They will appreciate the consideration you will show to their feelings even in a matter purely personal to yourself.

Your suggestions about the guest house were admirable. You may anticipate my approval in all such matters so long as you can accomplish them without a jar. We should tolerate any amount of carelessness and apparent dirt if insistence on their removal should mean discord. Dangerous insanitation should be put down, discord or no discord. You know what I mean.

Come near as many of the inmates as possible. And if you rule out the odd corners in Chhotelal, it will be a great blessing. I want you, in order that you can drink in the Ashram spirit and atmosphere, not to have any rigid time-table. Keep several unmortgaged hours so that you may be free to handle what comes your way.

Yes, do insist on scrupulous cleanliness in the dairy. But here again you will not sacrifice good fellowship for securing the highest standard. What has gone on so long without apparently doing harm may be endured a little while.

It was good you went to the Ambalals. Mr. Ambalal is so good, in spite of his obstinacy and often ignorant and harsh judgments.

No hard and fast vows beyond those that are necessary for the protection [of] the fundamentals need be now taken so long as I am in your midst. You will use your judgment as to what may be necessary either for your own growth or of the society in which you are living, when I am gone.

Please tell Mr. Saunders that it is difficult for me to write the book he suggests. It is so unlike me to write anything of an academic nature. And where is one to find the time when one lives from moment to moment!

In Ceylon, unless I write to the contrary, the address should be Colombo.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5287. Courtesy: Mirabehn

96. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

COIMBATORE,
Monday, October 17, 1927

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. I have gone through the letter from Mr. Lawrence which I return herewith. You are doing good work. Do stay on, if you get leave from the Ashram. I haven't got your article. Perhaps it is lying with Mahadev. You must be aware of the commotion in the Ashram. You don't have to trouble yourself by worrying over it from all that distance. I am trying to clear the matter from here, but I am not worried. In the end peace will return. A water-mill can be operated where we have a waterfall. But to have one worked by an artificial fall would be like paying for a shave more than the head is worth. I am keeping well. I shall start on the 1st and leave Ceylon on the 19th. In the interval therefore address the letters to Colombo.

We will pass three days on sea. Prabhudas will recover soon, if he does not let his ailment or any other matter worry him. Nor must he excercise himself more than he can stand. He should stay in Almora as long as he likes. There is nothing wrong in not returning before he is sure of his health. Devdas has been at fault. It appears therefore that he will not go there or anywhere else. He proposes to go to Wardha. But the operation is yet . . .[1] so he is confined to bed. I think he will join me at Tiruppur on the 28th.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9188

[1] The source has a blank here.

97. *LETTER TO KARIM MAHOMED MASTER*

October 17, 1927

BHAISHRI K. M.,

I have carefully gone through the book you sent to me. I doubt its usefulness. You have not gone deep. You have included some matters as being worthy of belief which even eminent Ulemas do not accept. I shall not make a list of these here. If you believe in them, I can have nothing to say to you, but I for one would not recommend a book containing them to anyone who wishes to understand Islam.

There are a few things, moreover, which seem dangerous to me at this critical time. Read again pages 26-7. You mention there that God never forgives the crime of those who worship gods and goddesses, that there is nothing but hell for such perpetrators of evil and that it is the same whether one prays for them or not. What effect will this have on Muslim readers! Can they who read it and believe it tolerate even for a moment Hindus who worship gods and goddesses, or even mix with them? What effect will these pages have on Hindus who read them?

I have read the verses in question. I do not put upon them the interpretation which you do. If your interpretation is the correct one, I would bear with the verses but certainly regret them.

At the present time, I would rather that no person who wishes to write on Islam should do so unless he possesses wide knowledge and generosity of heart.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

98. LETTER TO KISHORELAL MASHRUWALA

COIMBATORE,
October 17, 1927

I got all your three letters. The one about theft[1] reached me rather late, but even so it was three days ago. Since, however, your second letter, which was received before the first, did not ask for an immediate reply, I did not send a wire, and I could not get time before today to write. Your letter about truth was received yesterday. I saw from it that you were awaiting a reply to the letter about theft and, therefore, dispatched a wire[2] today. You must have got it. I could not, of course, explain everything in the wire.

Though we live in society, there are matters in which we should not or cannot follow it. Society may punish a thief because it does not believe in non-violence or cannot follow it. But those who seek to follow it in their lives, who have the courage to follow it, should remain neutral [in such cases]. If they do not, they will learn nothing from their effort to follow non-violence and society will make no progress. If this view is correct, you certainly cannot go to the court to give evidence. You should go, however, if you are summoned. In this case, at any rate, you should courteously explain to the magistrate what you think to be your dharma, so that the latter will punish the thief independently of you or may even let him off for want of evidence.

So far the course seems clear to me. You have, however, no right to ask for mercy to be shown to the thief. When did you feel compassion for him? If you had felt it when you found him, you and Gomati[3] would not have felt afraid and run after him. You would have remained unconcerned if he had taken away anything. But we have not risen high enough for this. Fear has not left us nor the love of possessions. I, therefore, feel that compassion is out of place, because unnatural. We may

[1] A thief was caught while lifting a trunk at the addressee's residence. In the lower court, he gave evidence against the accused but requested the magistrate to pardon the thief. In the mean time, he sought Gandhiji's advice, on receiving which he refused to give evidence in the Sessions Court.

[2] This is not available.

[3] Addressee's wife

strive, we have been striving to cultivate such compassion in us. But so long as compassion has not become a permanent sentiment in us, it cannot be regarded as springing from our heart and, therefore, genuine. If indeed it has become a permanent sentiment in our heart, we should take the thief in our hands, meet him and try to reform him. Nor can the court accede to such a plea for mercy. If the thief himself makes the request and promises to try to reform himself, the court may consider it. The court may accept our request too, if we offer to keep the thief with us so as to prevent him from being a danger to others. I do not feel inclined to go so far and ask for mercy towards him. I have not been able to think of a third alternative besides punishment and mercy. When compassion does not produce as much effect as even punishment, we should understand that it is not genuine or sufficiently strong. I have practically stopped taking interest in the Hindu-Muslim problem because I feel that the compassion in my heart is insufficient or is unnatural. Unnatural does not mean pretended, but only that it has not gone deeper than the intellect. If it had gone deeper than the intellect, I should have been able to discover an alternative to the method of reprisal. But I am not in such a condition as yet. I have been striving hard to cultivate that degree of intense ahimsa[1] in my heart. I must admit that up to the present I have failed. I have not accepted defeat however.

I should like to correct an error you have made. I am sure it is due to oversight. You say that the present-day law does not regard theft itself as crime, but that theft is a crime only when the thief is caught; surely it is not so bad as that. You would be right if you said that the thief who was not caught escaped punishment. But then, this must have been so even in the golden age. God alone can visit every theft with punishment, and those who believe in God actually hold that man has to suffer punishment for every transgression. I assume that you mean no more than this.

And now about the commotion in the Ashram. I am not surprised by it. Nor am I shocked. We are only making an attempt to cleanse our hearts and bring about complete understanding among ourselves. Commotion like the one you mention is inevitable in such an attempt. These developments convince me that we did right in establishing an association. It is only through such experiences that we shall learn the right manner of working

[1] The word is underlined in the original.

and discover new laws of community life, if there are any, which conform to the principle of non-violence. If any of us were a perfect being, he would have before now composed a new *smriti*. But the truth is that we are imperfect beings who are, nevertheless, making a sincere and devoted effort to become perfect. It would not pain me if we decided to start a new institution for those who could not live with us, provided the motive was sincere. There will be differences among us so long as we have not succeeded in cultivating true humility, that is, real non-violence. There will always be some who cannot live in harmony with the others. When such occasions arise, why should we hesitate to start a new institution, if it could be useful? If all of us are progressing towards non-violence we may unite again. If we do not, we shall only be playing on different branches of the same tree and, therefore, see unity even in our differences. Hence I think it necessary only that we make sure of this: that no one should be insincere, that we should not suspect one another's motives or believe others to be evil-minded and that no one should harbour selfish thoughts or wish to appear other than what he is.

I shall not now discuss the problem about truth. I have understood all that you have said, and I accept it too. However, there is another side, and a beautiful one to every one of the issues, and that should not be lost sight of. But I will take up this subject some other time. I am not impatient. I believe that both of us are seeking the same truth. I do not want, I do not like, that you should sit down to write your letters to me at a quarter past one at night; in fact I think it wrong of you to do so. It does not befit Gomati to insist that she will go through the treatment only if she gets your services. She ought to be able to accept the services of anyone who offers them sincerely.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

99. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

COIMBATORE,
Monday [*October 17, 1927*][1]

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I got both your letters. Please don't think that I feel hurt by what you and other women there write to me. It is but right that I should know everything that happens there. If I don't stay in the Ashram, I should help you through my ideas at any rate as much as I can.

You were the one that started the women's prayers. If you now don't take interest in them, wouldn't that be like the sea catching fire? It is your especial duty to attend them.

I wish to advise you all with regard to the conflicts among you which have arisen, without sitting in judgment over anyone. I will not form any opinion in my mind before I have talked with everyone. I have certainly not felt that Ramniklal is to blame in any way. I didn't send Radha's letter to him to inquire and ascertain the truth; I sent it so that all the women may understand the problem, come together and remove the misunderstandings. There was no reason for anyone to feel upset on reading that letter. Why should we be upset on discovering that someone thinks, justifiably, in a certain way about us? If we have done anything wrong, we should not feel upset when told about it, but atone for it and thank the person who drew our attention to it. If, on the other hand, the person has attributed anything to us without reason, whether he is an old man or a child we should look upon him as an ignorant person and forgive him. You may show this to the other women if you wish to.

And now your questions.

I have nothing to say about the comparison with gold.

You enjoyed peace in Bordi, Borivali and Matar because you were a guest there and were careful how you behaved. You lived there in an atmosphere created by you, or others treated you as a guest and changed the atmosphere to make you feel comfortable. But you look upon the Ashram as your home, you have made it so, and therefore you are not a guest there. You are all

[1] From *Bapuna Patro–6: G. S. Gangabehnne*; Gandhiji was at Coimbatore on this date.

members of one family. It is in the Ashram, therefore, that you will be really tested. Anyone there may find fault with you, or no one may listen to you; but you must bear with it all. If you do, you will enjoy peace. In a place where there is no cause for losing peace, the peace which you enjoy is not real peace. What is the value of the peace which an opium-addict enjoys? You will have won peace only when you enjoy it in circumstances the opposite of peaceful. Be sure that, so long as you do not enjoy the profoundest peace in the Ashram, you have not won real peace; that, till then, you have not really become an inmate of the Ashram. She alone is an inmate of the Ashram who lives on in the Ashram when others have left it, and will remain there till her death. Unless the inmates live thus, the Ashram will not be a real Ashram. I have never believed that it is. We are trying to make it one.

Neither you nor any one of us can say that what you regard as self-development is really so. The Lord has said that he alone goes to Him who thinks of Him, is filled with peace, even at the moment of death. It is, therefore, at that moment that we shall be tested, but who will judge whether we have passed the test? The truth is that real peace cannot be described, it can only be experienced. Ask the countless people sunk in ignorance; won't we have to say that they enjoy peace? But in fact their peace is not the peace of knowledge. The peace of knowledge is like nothing else in our ordinary experience. Even the capacity to endure hunger and thirst, heat and cold, should not be regarded as a sign of peace. A good many murderers have shown such capacity; but they draw their sword as soon as someone says a word to offend them. He alone enjoys real peace "who has no attachment and no aversion, no love for honour, for whom the pomp of wealth is nothing but a misfortune".[1]

Question me again if you have still not understood, and go on questioning till you do understand.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 8705. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

[1] *Ramacharitamanasa*, Uttarakanda

100. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Silence Day [*October 17, 1927*][1]

SISTERS,

I have your letter. I understand that all of you are disturbed but I am not worried by it. When I opened this question, I knew that you would feel agitated. But I found no other way of cleansing your minds of impurity. Be patient. Everything will turn out well, and we shall enjoy new and real peace. We are really one family. Now what do we do when there is unrest in the family? If both parties have goodwill, then each puts up with the other's anger, and tries to subdue one's own. That is what we should also do. If every one of you does her duty correctly, those who do not now do theirs, will also begin to do it; and if they do not, they will appear conspicuous as defaulters do. Make good use of this commotion and learn to be generous towards each other. To be generous means having no hatred for those whom we consider to be at fault, and loving and serving them. It is not generosity or love if we have goodwill for others only as long as they and we agree in thought and action. That is only amity or mutual affection. The use of the word 'love' is wrong in such cases. Let us call it friendship. 'Love' means friendly feeling for the enemy.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3671

[1] From the reference to the strained relations among the Ashram women

101. TELEGRAM TO V. J. PATEL[1]

[COIMBATORE,
On or after *October 17, 1927*]

VITHALBHAI PATEL
NADIAD

NOVEMBER FIXED FOR CEYLON. DIFFICULT POSTPONE. HERE TILL TWENTYFIRST. THEN TIRUPPUR.[2]

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 12862

102. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR

ON TOUR,
Asvina Krishna 8 [*October 18, 1927*][3]

BHAI RAMESHWARDAS,

What can I write? Why do you think you are in hell? And why live there? Have faith that Ramanama is our only resort and that all impurities of the heart will be washed away by the grace of Rama.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 185

[1] In reply to the telegram sent by Vithalbhai Patel, dated and received on October 17, 1927, which read: "Please adjust your programme so as to enable you be with me from second to eighth November. Very urgent. Dayalji starting with my letter to you."

[2] In reply to this telegram, Vithalbhai Patel wired back: "You will have to surmount all difficulties and accompany me second November. Please therefore adjust your programme accordingly and wire reply. Dayalbhai has already started." Vithalbhai was evidently sounding Gandhiji on behalf of the Viceroy. Viceroy's letter to Vithalbhai Patel, dated 13-10-1927, *inter alia*, said: "I am now in a position to say that I should like to invite Mr. Gandhi and Dr. Ansari to come and see me in Delhi; and I would therefore be grateful if you would ascertain from them whether they would be willing to respond to an invitation to do so." (*Vithalbhai Patel, Life and Times*, Book Two)

[3] The year is inferred from the contents; *vide* Vol. XXXIV, p. 223.

103. WHY I AM A HINDU

An American friend who subscribes herself as a lifelong friend of India writes:

> As Hinduism is one of the prominent religions of the East, and as you have made a study of Christianity and Hinduism, and on the basis of that study have announced that you are a Hindu, I beg leave to ask of you if you will do me the favour to give me your reasons for that choice. Hindus and Christians alike realize that man's chief need is to know God and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Believing that Christ was a revelation of God, Christians of America have sent to India thousands of their sons and daughters to tell the people of India about Christ. Will you in return kindly give us your interpretation of Hinduism and make a comparison of Hinduism with the teachings of Christ? I will be deeply grateful for this favour.

I have ventured at several missionary meetings to tell English and American missionaries that if they could have refrained from 'telling' India about Christ and had merely lived the life enjoined upon them by the Sermon on the Mount, India instead of suspecting them would have appreciated their living in the midst of her children and directly profited by their presence. Holding this view, I can 'tell' American friends nothing about Hinduism by way of 'return'. I do not believe in people telling others of their faith, especially with a view to conversion. Faith does not admit of telling. It has to be lived and then it becomes self-propagating.

Nor do I consider myself fit to interpret Hinduism except through my own life. And if I may not interpret Hinduism through my written word, I may not compare it with Christianity. The only thing it is possible for me therefore to do is to say, as briefly as I can, why I am a Hindu.

Believing as I do in the influence of heredity, being born in a Hindu family, I have remained a Hindu. I should reject it, if I found it inconsistent with my moral sense or my spiritual growth. On examination, I have found it to be the most tolerant of all religions known to me. Its freedom from dogma makes a forcible appeal to me inasmuch as it gives the votary the largest scope for self-expression. Not being an exclusive religion, it enables the followers of that faith not merely to respect all the other religions, but it also enables them to admire and assimilate what-

ever may be good in the other faiths. Non-violence is common to all religions, but it has found the highest expression and application in Hinduism. (I do not regard Jainism or Buddhism as separate from Hinduism.) Hinduism believes in the oneness not of merely all human life but in the oneness of all that lives. Its worship of the cow is, in my opinion, its unique contribution to the evolution of humanitarianism. It is a practical application of the belief in the oneness and, therefore, sacredness of all life. The great belief in transmigration is a direct consequence of that belief. Finally the discovery of the law of *varnashrama* is a magnificent result of the ceaseless search for truth. I must not burden this article with definitions of the essentials sketched here, except to say that the present ideas of cow-worship and *varnashrama* are a caricature of what in my opinion the originals are. The curious may see the definitions of cow-worship and *varnashrama* in the previous numbers of *Young India*. I hope to have to say on *varnashrama* in the near future. In this all-too-brief a sketch I have mentioned what occur to me to be the outstanding features of Hinduism that keep me in its fold.

Young India, 20-10-1927

104. TELEGRAM TO V. J. PATEL

October 20, 1927

DAYALJI JUST ARRIVED. ALSO YOUR WIRE. DIFFICULT ALTER CEYLON PROGRAMME. SHOULD GLADLY GO DELHI OR ELSEWHERE LATER IF INVITED. IN MY OPINION PRESENT JUNCTURE AM NOT HOPEFUL PERSONALLY RENDERING USEFUL SERVICE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. IF DESPITE MY LIMITATIONS IMMEDIATE VISIT DELHI CONSIDERED NECESSARY AM PREPARED POSTPONE CEYLON VISIT AND ATTEND DELHI PROVIDED INVITATION IS ANNOUNCED AND PUBLICATION AGREED STATEMENT PURPORT INTERVIEW IS PERMITTED. IF YOU CONSIDER THIS SATISFACTORY PLEASE REPEAT WHOLE TEXT PROPER QUARTERS BUT PERSONALLY URGE YOU KEEP ME OUT OF THIS BUSINESS. AM HERE TOMORROW TIRUPPUR UNTIL TWENTY-FOURTH CALICUT TWENTYFIFTH.

Vithalbhai Patel, Life and Times, Book Two, p. 777

105. TELEGRAM TO V. J. PATEL[1]

October 20, 1927

YOUR WIRE. THINK CONDITIONS NEITHER OFFENSIVE NOR HARD BUT DESIRABLE PUBLIC INTEREST. PLEASE WIRE FULL TEXT.

From a photostat: S.N. 12864

106. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

COIMBATORE,
October 20, 1927

MY DEAR BROTHER,

There is much fiery stuff coming from South Africa nowadays. Here is one cutting. I am watching what is happening but consider it wise not to say anything. But I shall not hesitate to intervene when necessary. What I find disturbing is a para in Manilal's letter which I translate below:

> I am not quite satisfied with his speeches.[2] He crosses the limits in praising the Empire and the benefits conferred by it on India. He thinks it necessary thus to please the Europeans. He seems to believe that thus only shall we secure something here. The effect of these speeches cannot be good in India. He has therefore asked me not to print them in *Indian Opinion*.

I thought I must pass on to you this from Manilal. For he is a good boy and brave boy. Knowing my later views about the Empire, I am not surprised at his mentality. He has not the faculty

[1] This is in reply to V. J. Patel's telegram, dated 20-10-1927, which read: "Before I wire full text of your telegram to proper quarters request you once again to agree to respond to invitation without conditions. If you still maintain your attitude I will send full text and let you know reply. Please wire immediately."

[2] Srinivasa Sastri wrote to his brother from Pretoria on October 6, 1927: "I fully expected criticism of my sentiments about the Empire. People must make allowance for the difference in latitude and longitude. The public speaker whose conscience is not dead must be content very often to be guilty of *suppressio veri*. If he doesn't suggest a falsehood he does as much as is possible."

of discrimination to see that we are like blood-brothers even though we do not hold the same views about the Empire. I have not said to him much about this letter of his beyond warning him against coming to hasty judgements and telling him that you do honestly believe the Empire activity to be on the whole beneficial. But you will of course not hesitate to summon him before you and speak to him if necessary, as you would to your own son. I do hope that you are not going to worry over what appears now and then in some papers here or what people may be talking there. Pray do not hesitate to tell me when you want me to act. Of course you know that I do not follow the papers closely, especially when I am moving from day to day.

May God keep you in good health.

With love,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

Letters of Srinivasa Sastri, pp. 169-70

107. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

Asvina Krishna 10 [October 20, 1927][1]

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

I did get your letter. But I could not reply owing to lack of time.

All my efforts to have you in the Ashram have failed so far. I have given up hope now. I do not also know what Chi. Mrityunjaya is to do. Now the only chance for you is to come by your own efforts. Talk to Father and it will be good if he can send you somehow. Do not be perturbed even if there is no opportunity to go to the Ashram. One of the *shlokas* we sing in the Ashram is as follows:

> Whose mind is untroubled in sorrows and longeth not for joys, who is free from passion, fear and wrath—he is called the ascetic of secure understanding.[2]

Or as Tulsidas says:

> One to whom glory and disaster are alike.[3]

[1] The year is inferred from the tour programme.
[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 56
[3] *Ramacharitamanasa*, Uttarakanda

If you have any further news of your husband, write to me. My health is all right. By the time this letter reaches you I shall be near Mangalore.
26-31 Mangalore
November 4-29 Colombo

Three days will be spent on sea.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3330

108. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

Thursday, October 20, 1927

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I got your letters.

I have conveyed to Sastriji your opinion about him expressed in your letter. I thought it best that he should know it. Someone has cabled to newspapers here unconnected extracts from his speeches in order to run him down. I am not surprised or pained by his praise of the Empire, since that is his view of it; were it not so, he would not have accepted service under it. Nevertheless, you can with due courtesy tell him whatever you think, so that if he wishes he may explain his attitude to you. Do not be hasty in anything you do.

Devdas has been operated upon for piles. He was operated upon by Dr. Rajan in Trichinopally. He is in the doctor's nursing home. He is quite well now. There is still a small wound, but it will heal soon. He will see me the day after tomorrow.

You should immediately send to the Ashram the money you owe for the goods sent to you. I have explained to you that you cannot delay paying this money, because the Ashram has no authority to supply goods on credit. Pay the amount, therefore, without delay.

How much weight has Sushila gained? How many miles can she walk now? How is her ear? Can she set the types with speed? Is the *Gita* being read?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I had a cable from Andrews informing me that he had wired to Natal about Pragji.

I got your letter just now. You write in it that you did not get a letter from me by one mail. You should get one by now. I did forget and missed one mail.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4726

109. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 21, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I get your letters regularly. I do not prohibit you from writing as many letters as you like. I simply said that I should be satisfied so long as you gave me one per week. I should be anxious if I did not get even one. I should welcome one every day if you felt like sending one.

I wonder if you do not find moving about in the sun rather trying. Do you wear a sunshade? You must not hesitate to use a hat if you need one.

Though I take the place of mother or rather because I take that privileged place the natural mother should be more to you than ever before. My connection with you to be pure must strengthen all natural affections. Only, they should become purer and lose all selfish taint.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5288. Courtesy: Mirabehn

110. LETTER TO SURENDRA

[After *October 22, 1927*][1]

CHI. SURENDRA,

I got your letter. *Pujya* Gangabehn[2] requests that you should give some time daily to the women's class. I approve of her request. Do give a little time, if you can spare it.

[1] From the reference to Devdas's wound; Gandhiji expected to meet Devdas on 22-10-1927. *Vide* "Letter to Manilal and Sushila Gandhi", 20-10-1927.

[2] Gangabehn Vaidya

Sundaram[1] met me here today by chance. I had suggested to Devdas to go to the Ashram, but he preferred Wardha. I am afraid his wound will take some time to heal.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]
Balkrishna. . .[2]

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9410

111. TELEGRAM TO V. J. PATEL[3]

TIRUPPUR,
October 23, 1927

YOUR WIRE JUST RECEIVED. RECOGNIZE DIFFICULTY PUBLICATION AND IN VIEW APPARENT URGENCY MY PRESENCE WILL GLADLY RESPOND INVITATION IF RECEIVED TIRUPPUR TILL TWENTYFOURTH. TWENTY-FIFTH CALICUT. TWENTYSIXTH AND AFTER MANGALORE.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 12865

[1] Tribhuvandas Luhar, a poet who had adopted this pen-name

[2] Two words in the source are illegible.

[3] In reply to Vithalbhai Patel's telegram, dated October 23, 1927, which read: "Received following telegram from Viceroy. Begins: '28 C. Thank you very much for your telegram of October 20th. I fully realize Gandhi's difficulties and would not suggest especially having regard to his health that he should alter his plans and take long journey unless I thought it important to see him. I should be quite willing if interview takes place that announcement of fact of invitation should be made but am afraid that I cannot agree to any statement regarding subject-matter of interview as this would inevitably impair confidential character of meeting. If I hear from you that in these circumstances he will come to Delhi I shall be happy to extend invitation to him. Please ascertain this and let me know by telegram. In mean time I propose, unless you see any objection, to invite Dr. Ansari without further delay to come and see me on November second.' Ends. Strongly advise and insist for country's sake permit me assure Viceroy that you would accept his invitation. Reply immediately."

112. SPEECH TO STUDENTS, TIRUPPUR

October 23, 1927

In declaring the *Gita* class open Mahatmaji advised the students to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning and regularly read the *Bhagavad Gita* daily. He was anxious that they should begin the study of the *Gita* in right earnest. If they could not read Sanskrit they could go in for a Tamil translation of the *Gita*, but not the English one, because the English rendering could not impart the true significance of the *Gita*. He said that the third chapter is an important one in the *Gita*. [He continued:][1]

The *Gita* contains the gospel of karma or work, the gospel of *bhakti* or devotion and the gospel of *jnana* or knowledge. Life should be a harmonious whole of these three. But the gospel of service is the basis of all, and what can be more necessary for those who want to serve the country than that they begin with the chapter enunciating the gospel of work? But you must approach it with the five necessary equipments, viz., ahimsa (non-violence), *satya* (truth), *brahmacharya* (celibacy), *aparigraha* (non-possession), and *asteya* (non-stealing). Then and then only will you be able to reach a correct interpretation of it. And then you will read it to discover in it ahimsa and not *himsa*, as so many nowadays try to do. Read it with the necessary equipment and I assure you you will have peace of which you were never aware before.

The Hindu, 25-10-1927 and *Young India*, 3-11-1927

[1] What follows is from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter", published in *Young India*, 3-11-1927.

113. DISCUSSION ON VARNADHARMA[1]

October 23, 1921

A few young men[2] sought an interview with Gandhiji for a discussion on *varnadharma*. . . . They were troubled as to how the Brahmin could shed his superiority so long as he continued to be a Brahmin.

Gandhiji said, taking an extreme case to drive the matter home:

Even Sita is not superior to a prostitute. Are you satisfied?

The friend said, "No, quite shocked." Gandhiji said:

I am, for Sita had no sense of superiority. Had she been proud of her purity she would have been nowhere. But she was not even conscious of it. She was pure, because it was impossible for her to be otherwise. Are the Himalayas conscious of their supreme heights? Not a bit of it. But if they were, they would crumble to pieces. Even so, *varna*, if it becomes synonymous with superiority, and an expression of egotism, will be nothing better than a halter round the neck. Max Muller put the spirit of Hinduism in a nutshell when he said: "India considers life as only one thing—DUTY—whereas others thought of enjoyment *cum* duty". *Varna* is nothing more than an indication of the duty that has been handed down to each one of us by our forefathers. In the West, when they talk of the amelioration of the lot of the masses, they talk of raising their standard of life. In India we need not talk of raising the standard of life. For, how can an outsider raise the standard, when the standard is within every one of us? We can only strive to increase man's opportunities of realizing and fulfilling his duties and of getting nearer to God. But you are today attempting the impossible task of uprooting the tree. Some of the branches and leaves, I admit, are rotten. Let us have the pruning knife and lop off those diseased branches, but let us not lay the axe at the root. You will be bad gardeners to destroy the tree under which you have lived and grown. Cut off the unnecessary excrescences, even if in the end the trunk with the root appears like a stubble, but if you keep the root intact and then fondly water it, it will some day grow into a fine big tree.

[1] From Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[2] Vithal Das Anandji Sait, M. N. Chikkana Chettiar, T. S. Kandaswami Chetti, T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar, K. S. Ramaswami Gounder, P. D. Asher and K. V. Venkatachalam Pillai

But as I said the tree cannot be destroyed, for the true Brahmin will stand all blows and yet stand erect in his sacrificial dignity. I will admit that there are few Brahmins today, few Kshatriyas, few Vaisyas and even few Sudras. For the Sudra too has an individuality. We are all slaves today. We cower today before the insolent might of a Dyer. Let us all aspire to fulfil each one of us his calling. Most of us will have to be Vaisyas, for it is the Vaisyas who hold us under their heels.

We will revere the Brahmin, not because of his superiority, but because of the superior service that he renders to us. It is because we are degraded today that one cannot think except in the terms of superiority and inferiority.

Young India, 3-11-1927

114. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TIRUPPUR[1]

October 23, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for all your addresses and all these purses, as also the different gifts of khadi and these two diamond ear-rings which have cut out the work for me and for you. Because, as you have known by this time, the valuable gifts are of value to me only on behalf of *Daridranarayana* and not for personal use. What little khadi I need for my own use I have already. And therefore, if you will have the patience, at the end of the speech I shall offer you all the khadi and these valuable ear-rings and these frames for your acceptance. You remind me that when some time ago I visited Tiruppur you called me khadi-king and you called this the capital of the khadi-king. It was a title which I accepted gratefully and in all humility and I recognized your claim to call this the capital of the khadi-king and inasmuch as I am not an exacting king, I am able to say that you have fairly earned the title that you gave to yourselves. You will retain the first place in all India in the matter of production. You have improved the quality of your khadi. But when I consider my own ambition and what it is that is required of you and of all India, I must confess that the progress, good relatively though it is, is not satisfactory. For, considering what we intend to do through the length and

[1] Gandhiji's speech in English was translated into Tamil by C. Rajagopalachari, sentence by sentence.

breadth of India, naturally this capital is expected to make use of all the cotton that is produced in the neighbouring areas. I expect you to have, by dint of service, such a hold upon the cotton cultivators that they would sell their cotton only to you and I expect you also by the same right of service to influence the poor villagers so that there will not be a single home left without a spinning-wheel working in it, and that there will not be a single weaver who weaves anything but hand-spun yarn. I do not want you to consider that this is beyond your reach. If you will retain the privilege of calling your town the capital of khadi you must have this ambition, and you will find that if you are actuated not by a motive of exploitation but by the simple motive of service to the poor villagers you will find that in no time you will acquire the influence that you should, both over the villagers and over the cotton cultivators and all this will be possible only if there is hearty co-operation between the different khadi merchants. You will also have to limit your own personal ambition about making money out of khadi. I have no doubt that khadi is a sound economic proposition. It can give you a decent living and moderate profits. There is, there should be, no room for individuals to get high rates of interest. I personally always suspect organizations which are capable of giving 25 per cent, give 20 per cent interest on their outlay. It may be safely laid down as a general proposition beyond challenge that wherever there are large and inordinate profits they have been obtained at the expense of the poor people. But the whole conception of khadi is that we, who are active in developing khadi, must regard ourselves as trustees for these starving villagers. Whatever is therefore earned beyond a respectable living must be returned to these villagers. And so long as this hand-spinning is strictly kept up, you will find that the king will stick to his little capital and advertise it for all it is worth.

But then there are other partners also in this company of *Daridranarayana* and these are the spinners and the weavers. The spinners, I know, are not in this meeting. I happened to know that there are some weavers here. I want to tell the weavers who are here and want them to give my message to those who are not here that I grieve to hear that there are some weavers here addicted to drink and gambling. In the firm of *Daridranarayana* there is really no room for drunkards and gamblers. Drink is an evil which has desolated thousands of homes throughout the world, and it behoves weavers who have anything to do with khadi that they at least will not defile their bodies with drink. A

man under the influence of drink forgets the distinction between wife and sister. I hope, therefore, that the young men in Tiruppur will bestir themselves and work in the midst of those who are given to drink and by gentle persuasion wean them from the drink habits.

Gambling is a vice which degrades the gambler and leads him to innumerable crimes. It must, therefore, be given up. You know that this part of the South is noted for the crime of murder. Hardly a week passes but sees a few cases of murder and it is well known that wherever there is drunkenness and gambling murder is the necessary consequence. We should really be ashamed of ourselves that there should be any men in society who hold life so cheaply that they would take it on the slightest provocation or the slightest pretext. If there are philanthropists in society in this place, as I have no doubt there are, I wish that they will study this crime, know exactly the causes and endeavour to remove this reproach from this fair district.

It gave me this morning the greatest joy and the greatest pleasure to meet the Head Master and some of the students of the Municipal High School. They asked me to open a *Gita* class, and in order to have the ceremony performed both the students and the staff came early morning at about quarter to four. I hope that these students will prove themselves worthy of this sacred study and they will not, having begun this great work, lag behind and neglect it. It is a step in the right direction. At the present moment there is a mania for literary education in this country. But little emphasis is placed upon character-building. Education which is not built upon solid foundation of character, in my humble opinion, is like a lifeless body. And for a Hindu boy I cannot conceive anything so fortifying as a reverent study of the *Bhagavad Gita*. If students will remember that they are to learn *Bhagavad Gita* not in order to be able to parade Sanskrit knowledge or a knowledge of the *Gita* itself, they will remember that they learn it to derive spiritual comforts from it and to solve all their difficulties through its aid. No man who engages in a reverent study of that book can help becoming a true servant of the nation and through it of humanity. Lokamanya Tilak has told us that *Bhagavad Gita* is pre-eminently a gospel of work and work that is absolutely selfless. And selfless work is nothing but service, nothing but sacrifice. I have ventured to suggest in spite of whatever might be said to the contrary that the true sacrifice of this age, sacrifice in terms of the *Bhagavad Gita*, is hand-spinning done for the sake of and in the name of the starving mil-

lions. And if the students will establish a living bond between themselves and the starving millions as they ought to do, they will find that there is nothing so powerful as the spinning-wheel to enable them to do so.

I was glad, therefore, to find in the municipal address the mention of the spinning-wheel in connection with the schools and I hope that the Municipality will carry its determination into effect in the near future. I must not now detain you over my remarks any longer, for, I will take some of your time in asking you to help me to dispose of these goods and volunteers will in the mean time kindly go out amongst the people and collect from those who believe in khadi and who have not paid for the Khadi Fund.

The Hindu, 25-10-1927

115. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 24, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I have all your letters and they were all welcome.

You have inquired where the straying letter could have gone. I have not suppressed any. So you must get it in due course.

I am still without your weight.

I admit your analysis of Bhansali's[1] case. He is too good a man to resent any friendly criticism. You should therefore talk to him freely and see what you can do with him. Similarly Chhotelal. He must be broken in. Probably he will listen to you. I am so glad you are looking after all these sick people and reporting to me daily. I shall look forward to your report of your visit to the dairy and the pinjrapole.

The little rest I have taken is not even prevention. It was merely precaution. As a matter of fact I paid for the rest by having to do two omitted places during the Tiruppur visit. But this harmless interruption was a good test for your nerves. No news, even untoward, should affect you. You should not say to yourself, 'How nice if he had not gone there or taken more rest.' It should be enough for you to believe that I am taking all the care of myself that my nature will allow me. There is no doubt that I want rest. But who will give it to me? Do we get all we want? If we did, where would our faith have any play at all? Sufficient

[1] J. P. Bhansali, an inmate of Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati

to know that not a blade moves but by His will. He will take care, if we will but trust Him, not after the manner of those who will take all the care that money can procure and then trust. That we must take some care is true. But men of trust will not do violence to their own nature and go out of their way to take precautions and adopt remedies which ordinary men have no means to command. The formula therefore is the less care the better and no more than the least of us can procure by reasonable effort. Judged by this standard, the care that I take of myself and that is being bestowed on me is out of all proportion and inconsistent with my profession of faith in God. You will thus see that everything I do in this direction appears to me to be exaggerated and I often feel that it would be a great benefit, if I could be neglected for a time. As it is, I am wrapped in cotton wool.

It is very likely that there will be another interruption and I shall have to go to Delhi for a day or two. I may know in the course of the day.

Love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5289. Courtesy: Mirabehn

116. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

October 24, 1927

DEAR SATIS BABU,

Your letter makes dismal reading but I do not mind. We may not attempt more than the atmosphere warrants or more than the purse allows. The chief thing is to reduce your stock. I shall see what I can do with your box when it arrives.

The new charkha has now been received. Though it shows extraordinary care in packing it has been received in a broken condition. The middle side has broken in two and the stopper is also damaged. But I had no difficulty in examining the wheel. Though it is better than the original, it is not equal to what Keshu has made and I am now using. It is much stronger than the one you have sent. The axle does not jut out of the box. The handle and the winder are made of metal. The spokes are much stronger. The hub too is made of metal. Although it has seen much rough usage it has not yet gone out of order. Before you make further improvements or standardize the pattern you should see Keshu's wheel. Have you much demand for the box charkha?

How are you keeping in health? Does the heart still give trouble?

I had heard about Shyam Babu before you gave me the news. I wish he would or could stick to this his latest. Did Sarat Babu get the consent of his wife? What more will he do, now that he has taken the robe? I prefer your sannyasa.

It is very likely that I shall have to go to Delhi and postpone the Ceylon visit for a few days. I should know for certain today or tomorrow.

Is Tarini better now? And the boy?

I had a full account about Abhoy Ashram. From it, it appears that there was no aggression on their part and that the story about masked spears is a pure fabrication. These fabrications are just now the order of the day, the same as was the case during the War on the part of both the sides.

With love,

BAPU

Here is a letter from Capt. Petavel and the enclosure. This is not the first of its kind but one out of many. I remember you once reported adversely on his institution. Now he has come

out with Dr. Ray's testimonial. I have this time asked him to see you and discuss the thing with you. Give him some time and show him the error of his ways unless you find him to be on the right path.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1578

117. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

October 24, 1927

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have a letter at last written in your own hand.

I forgot to tell you that Sir Purushottamdas wrote to me saying he could not find time to go [to] East Africa. He suggested Sarojini Devi's name. It might be as well to send her. But think of it and tell me what you propose.

Capt. Petavel has been sending me letters after letters asking me to support his plan. Somehow or other he does not inspire me with confidence in himself. You have warned me against him. He now asks me to get someone to report to me upon his plan and work. In my despair I have told him I have referred the matter to you and Satis Babu. Do you feel like saying anything that I may use? He has now procured an enthusiastic certificate from Dr. Ray. The more certificates he gets, the more dissatisfied I become.

Gujarat has not got 30 lakhs in public subscriptions but a huge sum from the Government. I quite like the idea of the Gujaratis in Calcutta giving all the amount to Orissa. The question is whether you have good and capable men to use it. Gujarat has nearly 1,000 workers operating upon the collections.

The finger has caused me much worry. The stiffness is a new thing. I shall draw a sigh of relief when you can report perfect recovery.

It is highly likely that I shall have to postpone the Ceylon visit a bit and go to Delhi. I should know definitely by tomorrow.

With love from us all,

MOHAN

Sorab is on his way to India. I shall certainly talk to him about the memorial. I am quite at one with you that had Rustomji been alive, he would have sent the whole amount.

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2623

118. LETTER TO R. PARTHASARTHI

October 24, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I do not remember having ever approved of mill cloth especially foreign being exhibited side by side with khadi. What I have done is reluctantly to agree to exhibit khadi in a separate court notwithstanding the knowledge that Indian mill cloth will also be exhibited somewhere in the exhibition.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

SJT. R. PARTHASARTHI
12, ARUNDALE STREET
MYLAPORE
MADRAS

From the original: G.N. 10847

119. TELEGRAM TO VICEROY[1]

[On or after *October 24, 1927*]

HIS EXCELLENCY VICEROY
VICEROY'S CAMP

YOUR EXCELLENCY'S WIRE JUST RECEIVED. IN VIEW THEREOF I HOPE WAIT ON YOUR EXCELLENCY APPOINTED TIME.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 12866

[1] In reply to the Viceroy's telegram, dated October 24, 1927, which read "I am anxious to have a talk with you on certain important and rather urgent matters and if it is convenient to you I should be very glad if you could come and see me in Delhi. The most convenient day for me would be Wednesday November second at eleven thirty. I realize that I am giving you very short notice and that this must inevitably cause you inconvenience but I hope it will not make it impossible for you to come. Please wire whether you can come on that date."

120. LETTER TO CHAND TYAGI

Dipavali [October 25, 1927][1]

BHAI CHAND,

Received your letter. For some time now don't fuss about the *Chandrayana* vow[2].

I am happy to learn that you have arrived at the Ashram. What work have you taken up?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3269

121. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Tuesday, Aso Vad Amas, Diwali [October 25, 1927][3]

SISTERS,

Your letter. Do not lose heart. Do not wait for the other person to set the example; don't say: 'Let everyone else first become good, then I too will be good.' On the contrary, the principle to be followed is: 'If I become pure, others will follow suit.' We have two proverbs which embody this idea. One says: "If you are good, the world is good", and the other: "As the individual, so the universe." If this were not true, one can never have any hopes for the world.

Rama is the support of the whole world. Sita is the mainstay of all women. So if every one of you strives with determination to be pure, and becomes devoted to her duty, you will find that everything else will straighten out in the end. 'Defeat' should never find a place in our dictionary.

[1] Gandhiji had earlier asked him to go to the Ashram; *vide* Vol. XXXIII, p. 171.

[2] The penance of gradually reducing the daily intake of food during the waning phase of the moon ending in a total fast on the 15th day, and increasing it similarly with the waxing moon to have a full meal on full-moon day

[3] The year is inferred from the advice to the addressees to make up their differences; *vide* "Letter to Ashram Women", 17-10-1927.

I am waiting to see what new resolves you are going to make on new-year's day. Talk with one who does not talk to you; go to one who does not come to you; try to please one who is displeased with you, and all this not for their good but for your own. The world is a creditor; we are its debtors.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3672

122. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CALICUT*

October 25, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for all these addresses, these purses, gifts of yarn and books and a watch. I shall present these things for your acceptance and convert them into money. And here our friend has just sent me a copy of Rabindranath Tagore's *Sadhana*. He is a student and says: "My sole object in presenting this book, i.e., Tagore's *Sadhana*, is that you might auction it and the money so realized might be added to the students' purse."

I recall the time now, many years ago, when I had the privilege with my friend and brother, Maulana Shaukat Ali, to address a meeting of this character from this very beautiful beach. Since then, many changes and grave happenings have taken place in this country. We know also that, at the present moment, the horizon in the north appears as black as it can be. But I should be false to myself and false to my country if I did not, in spite of the blackness of the horizon, redeclare my immovable faith in the necessity and possibility of Hindus and Mussalmans living in this land as blood-brothers. God alone knows how this consummation, so much to be desired, is to be brought about. But then, we know how often God confounds man's plans and brings about events for which he is least ready. And I would invite those who have the good of the country at heart to share this living faith of man with me. And this reminds me of a somewhat remarkable letter that was placed in my hands this afternoon. I have not yet been able to know who the writer of that letter is. I was not able to read the whole of this long letter myself, but I asked a friend to give me the substance of that letter. And the substance of that letter is this. The writer says, 'It is all very well for you to ask Mussalmans and Christians to save the cow

for you.' But the friend adds, 'What are you doing to the Hindus who are, in the sacred name of religion, killing day after day and year after year innocent animals and birds?' The rebuke is well deserved. I do not know how far this evil of sacrificing innocent animals and birds in the name of God prevails in this part of India. The writer little knows my sentiments about these things. Wherever I have spotted this evil, I have neither spared myself nor my hearers in condemning it. I know that this practice of sacrificing animals and birds in the name of the Almighty is a sinful superstition. And it is time that the Hindus, wherever they may be, who are offering great sacrifices, stop this sinful practice. I should be always in association with any movement designed to stop this inhuman practice. I derive comfort from the knowledge that this practice is not increasing in this country. But it is day by day falling into disrepute. It was only the other day that Her Highness the Maharani Regent of Travancore stopped all such sacrifices, and what she has been able to do by a decree, you can do by cultivating public opinion against this practice in this part of the country.

But I must hasten to other parts of my speech. I am glad that the students have come forward with their address. There is nothing new about their presenting me with the address. All over India, it has been my good fortune to enjoy the confidence and friendship of the student world. But I mention my pleasure over this address, because it contains a promise about khadi. The students have made a solemn promise in their address, henceforth to use nothing but khadi. Let me remind the students of the sacredness of promises. It is the custom very often in our country as also elsewhere especially for enthusiastic students to make all sorts of promises. This habit of making promises is really a vicious habit unless it is accompanied by a firm determination to fulfil them at any cost. If my recollections serve me right, it was from a teacher in Calicut that I received a pathetic letter asking me to speak to the student world, and put an emphasis on some of their failings. Day after day, it is being realized by educationists all the world over that mere literary education, unless it is built upon a solid foundation of character, is not only of no avail but is a mischievous accomplishment, and the beginning of character-building is surely made by complete adherence to truth. And it is a departure from truth not to fulfil a promise which has been once made. It is not a bad thing not to make promises hastily and without due deliberation. But it is absolutely necessary, after having once made them, to abide by them and fulfil them even

though we should have to die in the attempt. I therefore hope that the students, having made the promise, will abide by it.

But there are other things to which my attention was drawn in this letter, that the student world was thoughtlessly drifting and indulging in what might be superficially considered minor vices. My attention was drawn to the habit, which is spreading amongst students, of smoking and excessive tea or coffee drinking. These things may appear insignificant; but I know from the experience of many students that these are by no means insigificant things. It is a symptom of want of self-restraint; and this want of self-restraint is undermining the constitutions of the student world throughout India. I, therefore, urge the students to think well over what I have said and reconsider and recast their life. According to the Hindu conception, a student has to be and should remain a *brahmachari* so long as he is studying. If a student desires, as he ought to, to observe this self-control both in mind and body, it is necessary for him to deny himself all those things that are superfluous.

Coming to the other addresses I am glad that I find in every one of them, an enthusiastic endorsement of the message of the spinning-wheel. There is no doubt that, in abandoning home-spuns, we have committed a crime against Indian humanity, and it seems that Calicut was the very first offender in this respect; for I understand that it bears the name it does because Calicut was the first port where India turned to import calico from outside. But now I see your belief in the potency of khadi, and as you have told me that, whilst Calicut itself might appear a prosperous place, the country all round is groaning under poverty, it behoves you now to undo the mischief which Calicut commenced. And if you will be true to the profession you have made in your addresses I have to ask you the same thing that I have asked of the students, that you would all discard foreign cloth and take to khadi. But even that is not enough. You have to apply your talent to the organization and production of khadi in this very place. You, the citizens, including the students, can do so by doing sacrificial spinning and, having thus created the spinning atmosphere, you can take the gospel of spinning to all the villages round you and expect the villagers to spin for the whole of Malabar. And if you will but do so, you will find that you can add Rs. 4 per head per year to the wealth of the country and that you will do without replacing any other profitable occupation or without taking away from a single minute of your time which might be otherwise usefully occupied. And this is the penance we are expected to do for the sin that our forefathers committed

There is again the great evil, concentrated or intensified in this part of the country, of untouchability known as unapproachability and unseeability. The sooner we Hindus get rid of it the better it is for us and Hinduism.

The drink evil is sapping the manhood of the poor people of the country. If we identify ourselves with the poorest of our country, it behoves us to work in their midst and try to wean them from the evil habit, and you must not be satisfied until you have brought about total prohibition in the land.

There are other things about which I have been speaking at other meetings. But I do not propose to take up your time with those other things important though they are. But I want to do some more business with you. I received some jewellery from the ladies here. I have a piece of hand-made khadi, beautiful in my opinion, given to me at Sabari Ashram which many of you know or ought to know. It is unostentatiously doing khadi work and doing work amongst the untouchables. I would like you to watch its activities, and, if they commend themselves to you, to support that Ashram. The spinning of the yarn, of which this piece of khadi is made, is done by one Brahmin, two Nayars, three Pulayas and four Thiyyas. It is woven also by the boys of the Ashram. So you have got a romantic history.

I already drew your attention to this book[1]. And here too, these books are useful books presented by a friend. And if you have the patience to be with me yet for a while and if you will bid for these things it will naturally take a little time. At the ladies' meeting a lady gave me a very beautiful timepiece. This is to be wound for eight days at a time, and it is in perfect order. There is this wrist watch and some rings, one of which is beautiful. And then, there are these frames which, it is well known, are expected to be taken up by the meeting. I propose to start with these frames. I have the copies of all these addresses supplied to me beforehand. Now we can start.

The Hindu, 27-10-1927

[1] A copy of *Sadhana* held in his hand

123. TELEGRAM TO V. J. PATEL

October 26, 1927

REACHING BOMBAY TWENTYNINTH MORNING MANGALORE BOAT. PICK YOU BARODA THIRTIETH.[1]

Vithalbhai Patel, Life and Times, Book Two, p. 780

124. SPEECH TO ADI-DRAVIDAS, CALICUT

October 26, 1927

DEAR FRIENDS,

It has given me the greatest pleasure to be in your midst. I also liked the idea of your absolutely facing me so that I can have a good look at all of you.

It distresses me somewhat that we have got these different sections here. But, perhaps, it was inevitable—inevitable for my convenience. I had also hoped that I shall be able to see a much larger number of you as I have done elsewhere.

Now I have gone through the whole of your address, because I see a translation of it. You don't want me to give you my assurance that my whole heart is with you. And, if mere lip profession should make me one amongst you, I have even described myself as a Nayadi. But I know that at the present moment it is perhaps an impertinent profession. I have not come in touch with a single Nayadi, and on the only occasion when I was able to see a Nayadi I was not able to get a touch of him, because of a fearful hedge dividing me from him. I could not induce him to come round the hedge and onto the road, where I and my friends were standing, and I made myself believe that then I had no time to pass nor walk along the hedge and then pass by it and go on to this friend. So, if anybody in this audience or elsewhere accused me of making empty professions, I should straightway plead guilty. But, side by side with pleading guilty, I should also unhesitatingly declare that I felt for them and felt for you as keenly as anyone can possibly do in this world. Well, I am rather afraid that this very long address you have not understood, nor has it been explained to you. And so, I

[1] On the way to Delhi for interview with the Viceroy

propose to tell you what that address contains. The substance of it is that those who are called untouchables and unapproachables and unseeables are treated in the land of their birth as not merely outcastes, but as slaves; that they are property to be sold and bought; that you do not even enjoy the right of road that a human being should have in every part of the world, and that it was not without much difficulty that you were able successfully to get one girl admitted into a municipal school in Calicut. I do not know how far this last allegation, which is specific, is true; but I am quite aware that the substance of your address is true. And it is true, because, even we, who have gathered here and are witnessing this giving of address to me and my speech to you, have been and are neglectful of your interests. If we, who falsely call ourselves touchables, and what not, and arrogate superiority to ourselves, really felt for you as blood-brothers, these things could not stand for one single day. But there is a silver lining to this black cloud. Hindu conscience has been stung to the quick, and, at the present moment, a mighty movement is going on throughout the length and breadth of India to do some little reparation to you for the atrocious wrong that has been done to you. Many Indians who are known as great men are today interesting themselves in this matter. I have therefore no doubt whatsoever in my mind that the time is soon coming when these disabilities will disappear in their entirety. And I have no doubt also that if these disabilities do not disappear by some act of sacrifice and repentance on the part of the Hindus, Hinduism itself will disappear.

You have suggested, or it has been suggested on your behalf, in the addresses, that institutions should be established for you all over, which have residential arrangements for the instruction of your boys. The idea is no doubt admirable. You have yourselves mentioned the name of Mr. Kelappan Nair. He is conducting one such institution. Not very far from here is also Sabari Ashram. But I know that these are all too short for their requirements. And I want to tell you, and tell everybody in this audience that if more institutions have not sprung into being, it is not due to want of funds, but it is due to want of workers. There are Hindus enough today in India, who are willing to give as much money as may be required, if they can be assured that there are honest, industrious, self-sacrificing and intelligent workers to do this work. But to the shame of *savarna* Hindus, it must be confessed that we have not many workers of the stamp I have described for this work, and I am also aware

that locally there is not even money enough for this work. Th
largest amount of money required, even for this work, comes fron
the North. It should not be so, and, in order that this move-
ment of reform, which is long overdue in Hinduism, may becom
really universal in India, it is necessary that local Hindus every-
where should come forward and organize this reform both wit
men and money. And for this purpose, I want to make a concret
suggestion. Contrary to my expectation, this meeting is more
meeting of *savarna* Hindus and others than of *Adi-Dravidas*. A
the end, therefore, of this meeting, I propose to make an appea
not for the Khadi Fund, but for this particular kind of work; and
would use that Fund as a nucleus for a larger fund for work to b
done in Kerala. And whatever may be collected at this meeting
I shall hold, in order that it might be handed over to a committee
that may be formed here locally, because I feel that it is not righ
that always for this class of work money should come from th
North. Work so done cannot be considered to be really sub-
stantial. Whereas, what is necessary is that every Hindu shoul
definitely heal this wrong, and, at least, make reparation b
setting apart a certain sum from month to month or year to yea
for this work. And I can give you this assurance that whateve
money that you may subscribe now, I shall not part with, unles
I have seen a proper committee with a proper purse, set in work-
ing order.

Now so much for the part that *savarna* Hindus have got t
play. But you have very properly said, or it has been very pro-
perly said for you in this address, that, after all, salvation mus
come from your own self. I have no doubt that, if you coul
only feel your strength, you could free yourselves today. But i
has been stated, and properly stated in this address, that it is a
the present moment beyond your capacity to feel this glow o
strength. But there are some things which you can do at onc
If you are drinking you must give up drinking. If you ar
smoking you must give up smoking. If you are eating dea
meat, carrion, you must give that up. You hold it to be intoler-
able for a Hindu to kill cows or to eat beef. That is one absten-
tion enjoined most strictly upon every Hindu. And, in my ow
humble opinion, this abstention from cow-killing and beef-eatin
has a much deeper meaning than appears on the surface. I woul
like you, therefore, to give up this habit. I have just now hear
from our host that many of you are giving up eating beef. An
it gives me very great pleasure to hear this. I must apologize t
you for even thinking that you have been eating beef. But a

you will recall, I spoke conditionally. But I know that *Adi-Dravidas* in other parts of the South do eat beef. And if you will carry on this process of self-purification, little by little, you will find an evolution in yourselves, and you will also acquire self-confidence, which cannot possibly be gained by anybody.

Now, I do not propose to say anything more to you because I want to do the business that I have proposed for myself. But I shall hope that, since you have been brought here, or you have come here, those who have organized this meeting will more fully explain what I have told you, and you yourselves will go out into the midst of those who are related to you or known to you and carry my message to them.

Now, before I send out collectors in the midst of this meeting, I should like [the] principal men to announce their subscriptions themselves, if they have not got money enough in their pockets. Whatever is announced, I shall expect to be paid before I leave for Mangalore. I am an expert in making and organizing collections, and I know that it is a most dangerous thing to give credit for more than a few hours in the matter of collection. I want to exert no pressure, save the pressure of love. But, if you realize the significance of the speech I have made to you, I do not want you to give in niggardly fashion. I want you to consider this as your own work. Now, I leave this matter of collection in your hands.

At this stage, donations to the extent of about Rs. 380 were announced and paid on the spot. Whilst collections were going on, Mahatmaji read out a letter, which was handed over to him just then, and it was as follows:

> On the 5th instant I had occasion to go in the company of the District Scout Master and a Provincial Organizing Secretary of the Boy Scouts Association to the house of a lawyer. The agent of this gentleman received us all kindly and offered seats in the verandah. Subsequently, however, the lawyer was given our visiting-card. His agent came out and told me that since from my name I appeared to be an unapproachable I should stand out in the courtyard. Out of self-respect I came away. I do not wish to encroach on your valuable time by offering criticisms on this occasion of the highly educated Brahmin gentleman. It will surely pain you to know that the lawyer mentioned is also one of the best Brahmins in the district. The particular instance, therefore, shows how deep-rooted is the vice of untouchability in this part of India.

Mahatmaji carefully omitted all the names in the letter and said:

Of course it is a shameful thing. I believe that this instance must have happened, because I know myself that instances of this

character have happened elsewhere also. It is certainly not creditable. But let us all who are here make some penance for those who are still harbouring unapproachability. I can understand a man full of superstition doing this; but I cannot possibly understand a man who has received college education such as it is, has become a lawyer, is practising and so on, and still having—what shall I say—the audacity or the ignorance or whatever adjective or whatever word you may wish to use and turn out a man, every inch of him a gentleman. This instance ought not to occur. However, I have mentioned this instance to you in order to make my appeal more effective.

My suggestion now is that the organizers of this meeting will not let the grass grow under their feet, but they will set about working today and form a little committee not for name, but for work, and substantial work. Send me the names of that committee. I am going today to Mangalore and as I had expected to go to Ceylon, I won't be able to go nor shall I be able to give four days to Mangalore, as I had expected to do. But, having received an urgent invitation from the Viceroy who wants me to go to Delhi on "urgent and important matters" as he puts in his telegram, I am also obliged to interrupt my journey to Ceylon and go to Delhi from Mangalore, and then I hope to return as quickly as possible, and go to Ceylon. But you can correspond with me in Delhi where I expect to reach on the 31st and I should be there for three days. I make the suggestion in order that you may lose no time. I want this committee to be a substantial committee and the committee should make it a point of honour to raise every penny that may be required for this work in Malabar itself. I know now enough of Malabar. I know that Malabar has that capacity for financing this, your purification movement.

And then having done that, the second thing I want to say now is not in connection with this untouchability. But I cannot possibly leave this meeting without drawing the attention of these friends in front of me. Of course it hurts me to the quick to see a single person, who considers India as his or her land by birth or adoption, neglecting the poorest of the land by neglecting khadi. There are millions in our country, who are not called untouchables, but who have become untouchables because of semi-starvation. They have become untouchables because nobody goes to them. Nobody thinks of them. Nobody cares whether they are dying or whether they are living. Beasts and other animals at least get their food somehow or other. But these have become

less than animals even, because they are semi-starved. I want you therefore to think of them and in their name and for their sake not to invest a single rupee in buying any cloth but khadi, remembering that every rupee so spent means food for at least 16 women for one day.

And then I want you all to do a little spinning every day. If you do not know it, you should learn it. You can have clothes made out of yarn of your own spinning. I want to inform you that hundreds, possibly thousands, but I may not be able to verify the figure by thousands, but hundreds of the so-called untouchables have been reclaimed through the spinning-wheel. Many untouchables in the northern parts of India were weavers. But they were no weavers of fine cloth or patterns but of simple coarse cloth, and, as Manchester calico came, they ceased to weave, because nobody would give them anything to weave. I know one family in the Ashram which has now made several thousands of rupees after this movement came, and that family consisting of husband, wife and one boy also working, and one child I think, they are at the present moment earning Rs. 75 per month, and have free lodgings. I can give you instances of many such families, though not earning so much as this family, but earning a decent living. Supposing that this movement dies, all these families will be again out of work. Supposing that this movement continues to progress much more than it is doing now, hundreds and thousands of such families can be set up. For, I know that there is no limit to our capacity for producing cloth even of the finest khadi. But somehow or other we seem unfortunately to have lost the will to love our country. And so you have more khadi than there is demand at the present moment in India. I want you *Adi-Dravida* brethren to alter this state of things because, after you, poor men like you are to be counted in millions. When khadi becomes the current coin in India our economic march cannot be stayed by any power on earth. Now I thank you all for responding to this appeal of mine.

The Hindu, 28-10-1927

125. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MANGALORE*[1]

October 26, 1927

I am grateful to you for all the money which you have given me on behalf of *Daridranarayana* as also for the addresses. Since coming here I was very glad to find that some people spoke to me in my own language. I find that an address from the Arya Samaj in Hindi also was presented to me. If all the addresses had been in Hindi or at least in your own language, Kanarese, I would have been more glad. On this earth, God, Parameswhara, gives us sorrow and happiness. That Parameshwara has given me sorrow when I heard these addresses read in a foreign language. In this town I originally wanted to stay with you for four days. I wish I had been able to do so. This day in the ordinary course of events I would have been in Nileshwar. When we reached Nileshwar Railway Station this afternoon, I found thousands of people collected and in despair and my mind was very much aggrieved to disappoint them, and come here passing that station. I find some consolation in the fact that while serving the country I may have to disappoint so many by unavoidable change of programmes.

While I was in Tiruppur I received a telegram from the Viceroy. In that telegram His Excellency requested me to come up to Delhi in order to discuss with me some important matters. I think that by complying with that request also I may be able to do some service to the country. So it is that I had not the heart in me to refuse the invitation. I told you I have to go to Delhi and hence I am not able to stay in your midst long. So please excuse me. For what precise business I am going to Delhi to the Viceroy, why he has called me, and what important matter he wants to discuss with me, you might all be anxious to know. I am sorry to say that I myself do not know anything more about it. He has simply requested me to come even at a little inconvenience to myself. I have complete confidence that I will be able to finish my work in Delhi in two days. After that I want to go to Ceylon. If I get time and convenience when I come back, I will finish my full programme in your district.

I want to go to Ceylon and finish all the programmes that have been arranged there. I was to serve the *Daridranarayana*

[1] Gangadharrao Deshpande translated the speech into Kannada.

of Ceylon also as I have been serving here. So on account of all these reasons please excuse my abrupt departure tomorrow from Mangalore by sea.

Six or seven years ago I came here with my brother Maulana Shaukat Ali. That visit I will never forget. At that time Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and all other people in this country had been at peace. They trusted each other. There was perfect confidence between them. In Northern India, you have at the present time Hindus and Mussalmans fighting with each other and breaking each other's heads. This state of things should not continue. I am confident that good relations will be restored between them at no distant date.

In all your addresses you have mentioned about charkha and khadi and expressed your perfect confidence in the success of the movement. All the money you have given me is for that purpose. It is not enough if you say that you have faith in this movement. That will not make the movement successful. This khadi movement will succeed only if all of you wear khaddar. I see many of you around me dressed in foreign cloth. Our country produces enough cotton and food products. If all our countrymen had only been consuming imported food materials then what would have been our condition today? It is the same if we wear foreign cloth. One of my sisters told me that so long as she could not get very fine khadi she would not wear that dress. Now I will tell you of one instance. Suppose your mother or your daughter prepares food, even though it is not so nice you relish it well. In the same way the cloth prepared by your own brothers and sisters should be readily acceptable to you even if it be a little rough. As regards fine khadi I can supply you khadi of whatever fineness you want. You can see how fine is the cloth on which the addresses were printed and the khaddar saris worn by my wife. You can also produce such fine khadi if only you take a little trouble and interest. What I would request you is this: this day onwards you should promise me that you will wear khadi only.

In your municipal address I am glad to find that spinning has been introduced in the schools maintained under their jurisdiction. In these schools small children can make beautiful thread by means of *takli*. That is the best instrument to use in schools. You must teach them to spin in a scientific manner. I have noticed that those who are engaged in spinning khadi are very happy and contented. But all the members of the Municipal Council do not wear khaddar. They do not work on the charkha also, I

know. So if they introduce the charkha in schools and ask the students to spin they would consider it as a punishment. So in order to satisfy their students at least they should wear khadi.

There are certain evils in Hinduism like untouchability which I would bring to your notice. It is the duty of every Hindu to see that these vicious evils are immediately uprooted from the country if our Mother India is to attain salvation at all.

To the students who have gathered here I wish to say one word only. That is, the future of this country depends upon you alone. Because you are learning, it cannot be said that you are serving the country and the extent of your knowledge only has no relation to such service. I wanted to tell you two or three things more but I do not want to detain you.

Many of you may know that there is Hindi *prachar* work done by a disciple of the late revered Swami Shraddhanandji. He will teach Hindi to those who want to learn it. I would appeal to all of you, especially students, to learn that language. About the study of this language I have mentioned in several of my speeches in other places, and have also written a number of articles. Still if you want to hear more I will tell you a few words. If you desire to serve all India, if you want a bond of union between the northern and southern portions of this vast country, it is necessary that you should learn Hindi.

Finally, those who have not contributed enough money may do so even now. If there are any ladies who want to present any jewels to *Daridranarayana* they may do so. As regards my sisters I will tell you this—your ideal is Sita Devi. Just as she was beautiful in her natural form so also you should not desire the help of ornaments to aid your beauty. Moreover it is not good for you to wear ornaments while there are many of your sisters starving for food and work. Those who give a jewel worth Rs. 100 will provide food for sixteen hundred of their poor sisters for one day. These sisters do not beg. I do not give money to a beggar. I take full work from them. In Tamil Nadu, Travancore and other places many sisters and small children have given me various jewels and ornaments. I thank you all and may God bless you to understand what all I have said!

The Hindu, 28-10-1927

127. A GOOD SERVANT GONE

It was in 1921 at Bezwada that at a great ladies' meeting I saw the only khaddar-clad girl present there taking charge of the meeting, keeping order, and moving about with energy and decision. She was the first to give up, so far as I can remember, all her rich ornaments, bangles and a heavy gold chain. "Have you got the permission of your parents?," I asked her, as she was delivering all the ornaments to me. "My parents do not interfere with me and they let me do as I like," she replied. Annapurna Devi spoke English fluently. She had received her education at Bethune College in Calcutta. She went out amongst the huge mass of ladies for collections and brought ornaments and money. Ever since then she kept herself in touch with the movement—in fact dedicated herself to it. She was captain of lady volunteers at Coconada, and many have described in glowing terms her wonderful work at the time. Unfortunately even at this time she was not in robust health. She was married to Sjt. Magunti Bapi Needu, B.Sc. Whilst at Coimbatore I suddenly received a telegram several days after her death that she was no more. And now I have a letter from Sjt. Needu from which I take the following extracts[1]:

It is true, indeed, that I have lost more than a devoted follower. I feel like having lost one of my many daughters whom I have the good fortune to own throughout India. And she was among the very best of these. She never wavered in her faith and worked without expectation of praise or reward. I wish that many wives will acquire, by their purity and single-minded devotion, the gentle but commanding influence Annapurna Devi acquired over her husband. I appreciate his mild rebuke to me for Annapurna Devi having worn her body out in pursuit of the service of the Motherland. I doubt not that many young men and young women will have to imitate this good woman and die martyrs to duty before India becomes once more holy and free as millions believe her to have been in ancient times.

[1] Not reproduced here. The extracts gave a graphic description of Annapurna's steadfast devotion to Gandhiji, to khadi, non-co-operation and even to his dietetic experiments. The correspondent had asked for Gandhiji's consent to be included in a committee for her memorial.

I have not been able to respond to the request to serve on the committee referred to in the foregoing extracts. For I have many interests, and I could not cope with the burden of being a member of hundreds of committees. I have never believed in becoming merely an ornamental member of any committee or belonging to it for the sake of lending my name. That there should be a local memorial to perpetuate the memory of one so brave, pure and patriotic like Annapurna Devi, I have no doubt. But the best memorial would be for her worthy husband to follow in the footsteps of his wife, and perpetuate her memory by finding his lost partner in the country's cause. For according to his own testimony Annapurna Devi had already lost herself in that cause.

Young India, 27-10-1927

127. A WORTHY EXAMPLE

The Vice-Chairman of the Municipality of Chanda (C.P.) writes as follows:

> This is the first Municipality in Central Provinces and Berar to exempt khadi from payment of octroi. Over and above this, from 1922 it has been regularly making an annual grant of Rs. 500 for khadi work which is being utilized for maintaining a 'Shuddha Khadi Karyalaya' here. This Karyalaya has now been affiliated to the All-India Spinners' Association. The yarn produced in it has been found to be the best in Maharashtra, with regard to its count, evenness and strength. Since 1922 the Municipality has been employing, for all its purposes, exclusively khadi manufactured in the Chanda Khadi Karyalaya. It is now considering a scheme for introducing khadi in its schools.

The resolution referred to reads:

> Resolved that all the hand-spun and hand-woven khadi certified for its genuineness by the All-India Spinners' Association be exempted from payment of octroi duty.

This is an example worthy of imitation by every municipality. The khadi work by this Municipality is no new love but it is well tried. It has survived the vicissitudes through which the other municipalities, large and small, have passed, and it has grown from year to year. The Municipality has been able to achieve this success because many of its members not only believe in the message of the wheel but reduce their belief into practice

in their own lives. The evolution of khadi in this Municipality has been natural in its stages. It commenced with a monetary grant, then they introduced khadi uniform for its servants. This has been followed up by the removal of octroi duty on khadi, and it now proposes to introduce spinning in its schools. I hope that the introduction of spinning in the schools will be carried out in a scientific spirit, and that boys and girls will be induced to wear khadi before they are called upon to spin, and will be told why they should spin rather than do any manual work. I suggest, too, that the spinning will be on the *takli* and not on the wheel. Those boys who show great aptitude and take a keen interest in spinning may be supplied with spinning-wheels as loans to be worked not in the schools but in their homes, the wheels to be their property if they show continuous work for a period of one year. Both boys and girls should also be taught carding before they begin to spin, and their work should be tested daily and tabulated from time to time.

Young India, 27-10-1927

128. PROFITABLE COTTON CULTIVATION

A correspondent suggests that there should be a widespread movement to induce cotton cultivators to store a quantity of cotton for themselves to be converted into hand-spun yarn and finally into khadi for their own use. He also suggests that in non-cotton areas individual peasants should be encouraged to grow enough cotton as they grow vegetables for their own requirements. The correspondent contends that if this becomes popular, it will cheapen khadi for the peasantry. He says that in some parts of the South before the khadi movement came there were cultivators who followed this method. The correspondent thinks that Indian States are best able to promote this kind of cultivation of cotton.

There is much force in the correspondent's suggestion. The experiment of inducing cotton cultivators to retain sufficient cotton for their own needs is being tried in Bijolia (Rajputana), Bardoli and Kathiawar. But it has been found difficult in Kathiawar for the cultivators to resist the temptation of selling stored cotton when prices ruled high. This is not possible, until the cultivators appreciate the economics of khadi, and the fact that labour spent upon cotton during their leisure hours in subjecting it to the processes antecedent to weaving will bring about the same result that they achieve by selling cotton at a high price,

and will in addition free themselves from the clutches of the speculator. This means that the All-India Spinners' Association will have to educate the cultivators in the economics of khadi. There is no doubt that in order to overtake all the branches of khadi work it is necessary for khadi workers to come in close touch with the cotton growers, because even for buying cotton for the manufacture of khadi for town consumption, it would be necessary to come in touch with the cotton growers, and buy from them direct instead of buying in the market as is being done at present. If we would be independent of the speculator and the fluctuations of the cotton market and stabilize the price of khadi, we shall have to come in touch with the cultivator and induce him to deal with us directly. The greater the progress of khadi the more shall we find that our methods have to be far different from those hitherto adopted by the commercial world, which believes in selling at the highest price obtainable and buying at the cheapest rate possible. The world commerce at the present moment is not based upon equitable considerations. Its maxim is: 'Buyers beware.' The maxim of khadi economics is: 'Equity for all.' It therefore rules out the present soul-killing competitive method. Khadi economics are designed in the interest of the poorest and the helpless, and khadi will be successful only to the extent that the workers permeate the masses and command their confidence. And the only way of commanding their confidence is doing selfless work among them.

The correspondent's suggestion that the Indian States are more fortunately placed in the matter of storing cotton by cotton cultivators and growing enough for home consumption by other cultivators is no doubt true. The question however is: 'Who will bell the cat?' The majority of the States are little concerned with the welfare of the peasantry. Their aim in life for the present moment seems to be to increase their revenue as much as possible and at any cost, and to spend the largest part of it for their own pleasures. Moreover they, like other capitalists, have little faith in khadi economics. A very cautious experiment is now being tried, in Mysore, of finding out the possibilities of the spinning-wheel as a village industry. One may hope that if that experiment is tried scientifically and patiently and is found to succeed, it would prove infectious.

Young India, 27-10-1927

130. REMOVING UNTOUCHABILITY

Sjt. S. D. Nadkarni in a letter from Karwar, dated 10th September, says:

> Last week, my brother and I, helped by a band of young men, successfully organized, against many and unexpected difficulties, a खरा सार्वजनिक गणेशोत्सव (i.e., real all-inclusive Ganapati festival), so called because we included the untouchables along with the other Hindus in our programme of processions, *puja*, *bhajan*, *arati*, *kirtan*, Purana-reading and lastly a drama specially got written and staged twice during the festival. The drama is based on the real experience of the depressed-class member of our District School Board, who was refused admission into a school housed in a temple in a neighbouring village, while his Mussalman fellow-member and companion was admitted to inspect the school! Could you believe it? It was some of our own people (Hindu touch-me-nots) who tried to prevent the performance of the drama by setting up the local Muslims to petition to the authorities that the drama should be prohibited on the (totally false) ground that it was anti-Muslim. Could our people's opposition to a vital reform in our own community take a more suicidal course than this? But thank Reason and Justice, their attempts came to naught!
>
> With the help of Chitre Shastri of Poona (President of the Maharashtra Hindu Sabha) specially invited here for the purpose, we formed a local branch of the Hindu Sabha, with the object in particular of combating untouchability and securing admission to the untouchables into our public temples.

The opposition, and the manner of it, from the "touch-me-nots" as Sjt. Nadkarni calls the self-styled orthodox Hindus, to the presence of the so-called untouchables at the innocent performance organized by the reformers does not reflect any credit on them or their Hinduism, and it shows the lengths to which blind orthodoxy will go under the sacred name of religion. I congratulate Sjt. Nadkarni and his friends upon their having successfully taken the untouchable friends in their procession and admitted them to their theatrical performances. The only way to get rid of untouchability is for every reformer to do some such constructive work, be it ever so small, on behalf of the suppressed classes and by gentleness combined with firmness break down the double wall of superstition and prejudice. I hope that the reformers of

Karwar will succeed in their efforts to gain for the untouchables admission to the temples.

Young India, 27-10-1927

130. MESSAGE TO SOUTH INDIA

[*October 27, 1927*][1]

I am leaving the South not without much regret. Wherever I have gone I have experienced richest affection from all kinds of people, not excluding those who consider themselves to belong to a different political school. Wherever I went I found a genuine faith in the message of the spinning-wheel. I am therefore leaving the South full of hope. I wish that I had more time at my disposal so as to enable me to overtake the many places whose invitations I was not able to respond to. I ask the people now to translate their faith into practice more than they have hitherto done, and they will discover a potency in khadi which they had not expected.

The Hindu, 29-10-1927

131. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

BOMBAY
October 29, 192

When asked by a representative of *The Indian Daily Mail* whether h would be prepared to accept the appointment of assessors on the Royal Commission or boycott it, Mahatma Gandhi said:

I have not given any thought to this question.

He said he was out of touch with events being away in South India an hence was not prepared to say anything about the rumours he was told abou Indians being excluded from the Royal Commission.

Referring to the Unity Conference, Gandhiji said that he had not bee specially invited to it, but being a member of the All-India Congress Committee and the Working Committee he would under ordinary circumstances hav attended the Conference. He did not attend the Conference, because there w no way in which his services would be of any use.

[1] Gandhiji left Mangalore on the morning of October 27 to see the Viceroy on November 2.

The representative asked him: "As the question of Hindu-Muslim unity is important, don't you think that if you had lent your support to the deliberations of the Conference, it would have been of great assistance in arriving at an amicable settlement of the problem?"

[GANDHIJI]: I admit it is a very important question. If I had thought that I could assist the deliberations of the Conference, I would certainly have suspended my tour and gone to Calcutta. In short, I simply say that I hold strange views about the way of bringing about unity which in the present atmosphere cannot get accepted. Therefore, I can only be a hindrance rather than a help. So I felt that my abstaining was a kind of service.

Mahatmaji added that his "strange views" might be gleaned from the pages of *Young India*.[1]

[In reply to another question Gandhiji said:]

If someone invites me to consult me on some public matter I never reject the invitation.

He said he was not going to meet the Viceroy as a representative of anyone. Speaking about the Unity Conference at Calcutta, he said:

I was not invited to the Conference. In not inviting me Sri Aiyengar has only done me a kindness. He knows my views on the question and being a true friend he refrained from giving me unnecessary trouble. . . . I would have done no good by going. I have no sympathy for the attitude either of the Hindus or the Muslims and my presence at the Conference would have been only a hindrance.

Asked about his Southern tour Gandhiji said:

I have returned from this tour with hope. People evinced great enthusiasm about khadi—although they could have shown even greater enthusiasm.

Answering the criticism evoked by his statement that in some Hindu temples God was present only as much as He was in brothels, Gandhiji said:

I am not prepared to withdraw a single word of what I said. In a way, it is the truth. God is omnipresent. He is present in thieves' dens, in toddy shops and in brothels. But to worship God we do not go to these places. For this purpose we look for a temple, trusting that the atmosphere there will be pure. I say that in this sense God does not dwell in some of the temples. Or if

[1] What follows is a translation from the Hindi daily *Aaj*, 31-10-1927.

He does, it is only as much as in a brothel. If this statement of mine has hurt any Hindus I am sorry for it. But for the sake of truth and Hinduism I cannot either take away from or add to my statement.

Speaking about the statue agitation[1] Gandhiji said:

Since the Madras Council has turned down the resolution about removing the statue, the youth of Madras should redouble their effort and those members of the Council who supported the resolution should help them in every way. I cannot help saying that those who voted against the resolution have not understood the importance of this agitation. I am also sorry that the Europeans too obstructed the move.

The Hindu, 31-10-1927 and *Aaj*, 31-10-1927

133. NOTES

Ownerless

A language which does not possess a universally accepted dictionary but admits all words in it may be regarded as ownerless. We have inexhaustible means at our disposal for checking spellings of English words. From huge dictionaries to the smallest and cheapest pocket-sized ones they are available. In all of them uniform spellings are to be found.

I have an impression that commonly accepted dictionaries are available for Hindustani and other languages. Gujarati is the only language which has hitherto remained ownerless. I do not know of a single Gujarati dictionary which is commonly accepted or which contains all the words in the language. I have often made efforts in this direction but failed every time.

Some workers have been making efforts over several years to remedy this deficiency. Their work may now be regarded as having secured a good footing. Shri Narahari Parikh has taken upon himself the special responsibility for this. Kakasaheb Kalelkar is its founder-compiler. The approval of as many learned men as possible has been secured in regard to the principles that are being followed in the compilation of this dictionary[2]. It will be published under their seals and their signatures.

However, an increasing number of difficulties are cropping up as this work makes headway. Every lover of the language

[1] For the removal of Neill statue in Madras; *vide* also pp. 53-5 and 125-6.

[2] *Jodni Kosh*, published in 1929 with a preface by D. B. Kalelkar

can help in solving some of these difficulties. The reader will see for himself how and in what particular manner he can help by reading Shri Narahari Parikh's appeal to the lovers of the language published in this issue. Without the assistance of a large number of persons this work cannot be accomplished as well as it should be. I hope, therefore, that everyone will give the best help he or she can.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 30-10-1927

134. INTERVIEW TO "INDIAN NATIONAL HERALD"

[On or before *October 30, 1927*][1]

A representative of the *Indian National Herald* questioned him as to what attitude he would take up at the Viceregal Conference, if he were faced with the proposition so much in the air, viz., that the Statutory Commission is to be composed of parliamentarians and Indians to act as mere assessors. Gandhiji replied:

How the Royal Commission should be constituted is as alien a subject to me as, say, the cure for tuberculosis which falls in the province of a medical expert. I have paid no thought to the subject of Royal Commission because it is distinctly outside the sphere of my knowledge, thoughts and activities.

Q. Would you accept a seat on the Royal Commission, if one was offered to you?

A: What is the use of asking me that question? I had once speculated what I would do if I were appointed Viceroy of India, but those days of speculation are gone.

In the end, the *Herald*'s representative asked: "As a sure panacea for the country's ills, it has been suggested that you should be given dictatorial powers in all our national activities and be persuaded to play the Mussolini in India. How do you think that idea will work?"

Gandhiji returned a hearty laugh, then replied in all seriousness:

I have neither the ambitions of Mussolini nor can I have his powers. If dictatorship were thrust on me, I should cut a sorry figure as an Indian Mussolini. Moreover, you can't impose by force any reforms, social or otherwise. In other words, you cannot make people good by force.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-11-1927

[1] Gandhiji arrived in Bombay on October 29 and left for Delhi on the 30th.

134. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

Sunday [October 30, 1927][1]

CHI. MIRA,

Your letters have been a great comfort to me, as they have enabled me to know all about the patients. I am glad you are clearing the kitchen thoroughly. I did write last Monday. You must have got that letter by now. More tomorrow.

Love,

BAPU

[PS.]

I hope to be for a day at the Ashram during the return journey.

From the original: C.W. 5296. Courtesy: Mirabehn

135. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

Monday [October 31, 1927][2]

CHI. MIRA,

This is being written on a moving jolting train. And I am disinclined to do any writing at all today. It is now 4 p.m. when I have commenced the Monday letters. I have done a very fair amount of sleeping and an equal amount of listening to two friends.

I want you to tell me all you saw at the dairy and the pinjrapoles and the names of the ten. But perhaps there will be hardly time for you to write in reply so as to reach me in Delhi. For if I finish with the Viceroy on 2nd at the very first interview I shall hope to leave that very day for Sabarmati. Let us see. There is no warrant to hope much from the interview but I would not reject the advance on that ground.

I am looking forward to seeing both the serious patients absolutely free from fever. You should press both to take milk principally and keep their bowels in order.

Love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5290. Courtesy: Mirabehn

[1] From the references to Gandhiji's proposed halt at the Ashram and to a letter already written; *vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", 24-10-1927.

[2] From the contents of the succeeding item; *vide* also "Letter to Mirabehn", 30-10-1927.

136. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Sud 6 [October 31, 1927][1]

SISTERS,

I tried to write in ink; but the train is moving so fast and is shaking so much that I cannot. And yet, how can I miss writing to you my Monday letter?

Never give up your efforts at unity. Success lies in the effort itself. God has promised that effort for good never goes waste and all of us have had some experience of this. You cannot now give up the store work. You should not, out of diffidence, give up work once undertaken. There is no reason either to feel diffident or to fear defeat. If a few of you gain experience and become expert in the work, there should be no hitch whatsoever; if you give up the store work out of a sense of defeatism, you will never be able to undertake any other work without any misgiving. Even if there are differences of opinion and petty jealousies, whatever work has to be done must be done. We should certainly not do less than what others do.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I hope to see you within three or four days.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3673

137. LETTER TO GANGABEHN JHAVERI

Silence Day, Kartak Sud 6 [October 31, 1927][2]

CHI. GANGABEHN JHAVERI,

I got your letter about the girl and her mother. I am sure Gangabehn[3] will be able to apply the correct remedy for burns. It is all to the good that one should lose faith in doctors, but the

[1] Year and month inferred from the reference to the Ashram women's efforts towards unity and Gandhiji's hope to see them "within three or four days"

[2] The addressee was elected president of the Ashram women in September 1927.

[3] Gangabehn Vaidya

cause should not be the negligence of one of them. Carefulness is an independent quality of character. We may, therefore, place ourselves in the hands of a doctor about whose carefulness we have no doubt at all and in whom we have faith, and then trust to God.

You should not be impatient to give up the Presidentship. It is certain now that I shall go to the Ashram for a day. You may tell me more then. Consider your position not as a privilege but as a responsibility. One should never pass on responsibility to someone else.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3124

139. LETTER TO PARASHURAM MEHROTRA

Tuesday, November 1, 1927

CHI. PARASRAM,

I have your letter just now. Rajkishori's[1] soul is certainly at peace. You must have fortitude. May God grant you peace and faith.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 2972. Courtesy: Parashuram Mehrotra

140. SPEECH AT JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA, DELHI

November 2, 1927

The boys that were just introduced to you are grandsons of my friend and fellow-worker who was like a blood-brother to me, the late Ahmed Mahomed Kachhalia whom I naturally recall as I see the boys, and about whom I think I had better tell you something. Amongst the Hindus and Mussalmans that lived in South Africa in the days of satyagraha there was not a single Indian who could compare with Kachhalia in his bravery and his integrity. He sacrificed his all for the honour and prestige of his country. He cared not for his business nor for his wealth, nor

[1] Addressee's wife who had passed away a few days earlier

for his friends, and plunged himself whole-heartedly into the struggle. Even in those days the cursed Hindu-Muslim differences now and then cropped up, but Kachhalia held the scales even between the two. No one ever accused him of partiality for his community.

And he had learnt this great virtue of patriotism and tolerance not at any school nor in England, but in his own home, for he wrote even Gujarati with difficulty. Lawyers were amazed at the way in which he met their arguments and puzzled them, and his uncommon common sense was often very helpful to them. It was he who led the satyagrahis, and he died in harness.[1] He had a son called Ali whom he had trusted to my care. A lad of 11 he was wonderfully restrained, and a devout Mussalman. He never missed a day of fast during the sacred month of Ramzan. And yet he had no ill will towards Hindu boys. Today so-called religious devoutness in either is synonymous with a dislike, if not hatred, for other religions. Ali had no such dislike, no hatred. Well, both the father and the son are to me names to conjure with, and may their example inspire you.

In those days when Hindus and Mussalmans seemed to be one and ready to shed their blood for one another, and for their country, I appealed to the students to leave Government schools and colleges. The many years that have passed have left me utterly unrepentant for having asked those boys to come out of those institutions, and I am firmly of opinion that those who responded to the call served their land, and I am sure the future historian of India will record their sacrifice with approval.

But alas, today there are Muslims who go to mosques and offer prayers, and there are Hindus who visit temples, worship God and they are full of hatred against each other. They have begun to think that going to mosque or temple means that we should hate each other. But Ali, though a very religious soul, never thought so. I have related this story to you simply because I wish every one of you to be truly patriotic like the great Kachhalia and his loving son Ali. I pray to God to bless you with their noble heart.[2]

[1] At this stage Hakim Ajmal Khan pointed out that Gandhiji was not audible on account of his low voice and hence Maulana Mohammed Ali be asked to repeat sentence by sentence what Gandhiji spoke. Mohammed Ali then related in brief what Gandhiji had already said.

[2] This paragraph is from *The Hindustan Times*.

Hakimji has reminded you of that memorable day (11th October, 1920), when Hindus and Muslims had sunk their differences and they had united for ever, when students all over India were invited to come out of all Government-owned or aided institutions. I know that I had a great hand in this invitation, but I make bold to say that even after seven years, I don't feel the least sorry for that nor do I think that I committed a blunder in that. I believe that those who gave up their studies at the Government institutions did a great service to the country. I am sure that when the history of that period in India will be written the historian will no doubt have to write that those who boycotted Government institutions did great good to themselves and to their country.[1]

I am glad to find here some of the traces of those proud days, and I am very happy that you are trying your utmost to keep the flag flying. Your number is small, but the world never overflowed with good and true men. I ask you not to worry yourselves about the smallness of the number, but to remember that however few you may be the freedom of the country depends on you. Freedom has very little to do with your learning the letters or even with mere mechanical plying of the *takli*. If you have not the things essential for the freedom of India, I do not know who else has them. Those things are fear of God and freedom from fear of any man or a combination of men called an empire. If training in these two essentials cannot be had in your institutions, I do not know where else it can be had. But I know your professors, I know Hakimsaheb, and I am sure that these two essentials are being very carefully taught.

I do not mind the unsatisfactory state of your finances. In fact I am glad that we should be living from hand to mouth, so that we may all the better cherish our Maker and fear Him.

Mahatmaji laid great stress on the fact that if the University was doin good work, they must be confident that God will supply them with funds.[2]

Hakimji was quite right when he said that it was difficult fo me to come to Delhi. But to come to you was a solace and comfort. It is not to please you that I came here, but to pleas myself. I came with a selfish end in view, and that is to tell yo that in spite of the storm of hatred and poison raging outsid your Millia, in spite of the Muslim running at the Hindu's throa and *vice versa*, you boys here will keep your heads cool, will nc

[1] & [2] These paragraphs are from *The Hindustan Times*.

deny your Maker, will give no room in your hearts to hatred, nor even in your mind gloat over the country and its religions going to wreck and ruin. That's the only hope that has drawn me to you.

You will have noticed that I have said nothing about khadi or *takli*. That is because even khadi and *takli* are nothing before the essentials I have talked to you about. You may ply your *takli* and wear khadi, but if you do not do the things I have told you, your khadi and *takli* will be of no account. But you will, I am sure, not forget what Hakimsaheb has told you about the necessity of wearing khaddar. You will bear in mind that it is by means of khadi that we are supporting 50,000 spinners today besides hundreds of weavers, washermen, carpenters, etc. Do not forget that many of these are Mussalmans. Without the charkha the Mussalman women in many places would have been starving. There is no other way of identifying with yourselves the Hindu and Muslim poor than that of wearing khadi.

Then Mahatmaji spoke very feelingly on the urgent need of building moral character. He said:

I meet thousands of students in my tour in the country. I find them entangled in ugly and dirty habits, which need no mention, because you all know. I pray God that He may save you from those dirty doings. When a man makes his hands, eyes and mind dirty, he is no more a man, but he becomes an animal.[1]

You should always abstain from doing any evil with hands, mind or eyes. If we want to be truly brave men then we must regard all women as our mothers, sisters, or daughters, according to their age. Never cast a bad eye on any lady. We must be prepared to die for the honour of women. I know people forget this duty nowadays. I once again pray God to save you from this evil.[2]

Above all keep yourselves pure and clean, and learn to keep your promises even at the cost of life, and have the memory of the examples I have cited to you ever green in your hearts.

Concluding, Mahatmaji thanked the students for the purse and prayed that their University may live long and become India's freedom centre.[3]

Young India, 10-11-1927 and *The Hindustan Times*, 4-11-1927

[1], [2] & [3] These paragraphs are from *The Hindustan Times*.

140. NEED FOR SELF-CONVERSION

Lokamanya gave us his message in four simple words. But there are even now people who question the proposition that swaraj is their birthright even as there are some who question the existence of God. The swaraj movement, therefore, is a movement to make us realize that swaraj is our birthright. In the midst of the many reminders that we already have of the existence of this need of self-conversion, the debate in the Madras Legislative Council on the Neill statue satyagraha came as an additional and emphatic reminder of that need. The innocent resolution asking for the removal of the offending statue was lost by an overwhelming majority. Almost all the Indian members, except the stalwarts, voted against the resolution. The motion showed the sharp difference between the Swarajist mentality and every other. This vote and the debate are a fresh demonstration of the fact that swaraj is delayed not so much by the obstinacy of the English 'rulers' as by our own refusal to recognize and work for our status. This agitation for the removal of the Neill statue is, in my humble opinion, a step towards our goal. National self-respect demands the removal not only of the Neill statue but of every emblem of our slavery, as I regard this statue to be. The agitation gains force by reason of the fact that it has no material gain as its objective. Swaraj will be within easy reach when millions of Indians unite in sacrificing themselves for the vindication of mere self-respect. Why does an Englishman feel personally insulted by and would die in the attempt to resent an insult offered to the Union Jack? It is not a sentiment to be despised or curbed. The method he adopts to resent the wrong is no doubt often barbarous, but if he ceased to cherish the sentiment itself, he would lose national solidarity and the power of sacrificing himself for the nation to which he belongs. Even so, if we were conscious of our birthright, it should be a matter for pride for us to know that there are young men who resent the presence in our midst of a statue that is an insult to the nation. Many Indian members who took part in the debate betrayed no such consciousness or pride. To them the young men who were fighting the nation's battle were ignorant men whose conduct was worthy only of condemnation. They saw nothing wrong in the statue standing in a prominent public place where there should be statues only of national heroes whose lives would inspire and ennoble the nation

It cannot be too clearly pointed out that this satyagraha is not aimed at General Neill as man. It would be just as appropriate and necessary if instead of General Neill it was General Virsingh whose statue was erected in order to perpetuate a reign of 'frightfulness'.

There was in the debate a defence of the statue offered on behalf of the Europeans. It was cautiously, temperately and plausibly worded. Nevertheless it betrayed the European mentality. That for which General Neill stood was necessary for saving the Empire. And in order to cover the misdeeds of General Neill, it became necessary for the defender to vote down Mr. Thompson, the author of *The Other Side of the Medal*, as a neurotic, and to unearth a fulsome address presented to General Neill's regiment by 110 Hindus of Madras two years after the Mutiny. I have no means of ascertaining the circumstances in which the address was presented, but it does not appear to me to be at all strange that such an address was presented. For it is possible to quote such instances from contemporary events. Was not General Dyer presented with a similar address in Amritsar itself? And it would be strange if even now Sir Michael O'Dwyer, if he returned to India, did not find 110 Indians to present an address to him, if it was found necessary in the interest of good government. Have not the most unpopular Viceroys received addresses and trophies in our own times?

It is a matter of great pity to find Englishmen applaud sentiments in us which they would be ashamed to see expressed by Englishmen. I remember the wife of a Governor leading loud applause at a conference at which in speaking to a resolution on loyalty a learned Indian permitted himself to say that he considered every Britisher to be his teacher and that he owed all he was to Britain. The Madras performance was somewhat after that style and it grieved me.

But let not the adverse vote of the Madras Council discourage the young men who are fighting the battle against symbols of terrorism. They must not be angry against either Englishmen or the Indians who are now opposing the agitation. They must have faith in themselves and their cause, and they will convert the very men who are now opposing them. The agitation, of which they have laid the foundation, is bound to succeed, if they will keep it strictly non-violent and within the prescribed limits.

Young India, 3-11-1927

141. TELEGRAM TO MITHUBEHN PETIT

November 3, 1927

MITHUBEHN PETIT
BOMBAY

LEAVING AHMEDABAD TONIGHT FOR BOMBAY. FIFTH EVENING LEAVE [FOR] COLOMBO.

From a microfilm: S.N. 12838

142. TELEGRAM TO SOMASUNDARAM

November 5, 1927

SOMASUNDARAM
PROCTOR
89, DAM STREET
COLOMBO

SAILING EARLY MORNING TOMORROW BRITISH INDIA CARGO STEAMER. REACHING ABOUT TENTH.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 12838

143. TELEGRAM TO JALRUST, BOMBAY

November 5, 1927

JALRUST[1]
BOMBAY

LEAVING TONIGHT GUJARAT MAIL. MEET GRANT ROAD STATION. GOING DIRECT FROM STATION. TAKING BOAT FOR COLOMBO.

From a microfilm: S.N. 12838

[1] Presumably the firm of Jalbhai and Rustamji

144. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

November 5, 1927

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI
GANDHI ASHRAM
TIRUCHENGODU

SAILING TOMORROW EARLY MORNING. REACHING COLOMBO ABOUT TENTH. WIRE COLOMBO. BRING LAKSHMI.

BAPU

From a microfilm: S.N. 12838

145. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

BOMBAY,
Sunday [November 6, 1927][1]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

It was by sheer chance I got your letter, because the ship in which I was to sail [to Colombo] was delayed.[2] It was as well.

The use of the expression "Marwari interest" should not have pained you. And if it did, you should have told one like me then and there. I had used the expression only jokingly. I often use the word 'Kathiawari' in its derogatory sense. 'Kathiawari' suggests a crook. It does not at all mean that I am a crook. Being attached to you I shall not use even jestingly the word 'Marwari' in its derogatory sense, if you so wish. But I feel that you should not be afraid of such expressions. The idiom "when Greek meets Greek" is well known. But this does not mean that every Greek is treacherous.

For your information I may tell you that in Gujarat too there are many who exact exorbitant interest. Marwaris may be good or bad, your body must get well like your heart; and you should

[1] From the reference to the ship to Ceylon being delayed
[2] *Vide* the succeeding item.

be prepared to sacrifice the Marwari community for the sake of India.

Yours,

MOHANDAS

11-21 Colombo
22-25 Touring

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6150. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

146. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

November 6, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

Man proposes, God disposes. On reaching Bombay Shantikumar coolly told me the steamer was not going today but tomorrow. It was none of his fault. He came to know the postponement too late to let me know. It was open to me to take the train today. But I did not mind a day's delay. It will touch Tuticorin which we should reach on 9th or 10th.

I hope you are quite composed and that you have cleared up things with Krishnadas. I was not satisfied with my talks with Bhansali yesterday. His looks and his manners are changed. He was very good and sweet but there was a weirdness and an unnaturalness which pained me. I want you to cultivate him and help him gently out of his moods. But of course he needs most delicate handling.

I may not write tomorrow (Monday) as there will be no halting anywhere to post. I have taken special silence today to cope with correspondence.

Love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5291. Courtesy: Mirabehn

147. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

November 6, 1927

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I get letters from you regularly, but they are letters which I feel you write as a matter of social duty or to keep your promise. The letters which I used to write to my elders were not of this kind; I gave in them a detailed description of my life. Today Mira, aged thirty-two, writes letters to me as long as ten to twenty sheets, though she writes as often as twice or thrice a week. She writes to her mother once every week and in those letters, too, she pours out her whole heart. One of you two at any rate should get time. If you wish you can write about many things, such as how your press is working, what difficulties you have to face, whether your expenses have increased or decreased, how large the circulation of the paper is, and so on. You can also, likewise, give information about the social and political conditions there. I may even be able to use your reports sometimes.

Why is it that Sushila does not get strong? Does she digest the food she eats? What is her diet? How much milk does she take? Do you obtain fresh milk, and cow's milk? What work does Sushila now do in the press?

I would have missed the mail this time, were it not that God saved me. For I was to sail for Colombo today. I would not have been able to catch the mail for South Africa from there. Today is Sunday. The mail leaves on Wednesday. Sorabji and his bride came to see me today and had my blessings. The marriage will take place on the 18th. There is much I can write about Harilal, but I don't wish to spend time on the subject today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4727

148. MESSAGE TO PEOPLE OF CEYLON

[Before *November 7, 1927*]

Though I am going to Ceylon as a self-chosen representative of *Daridranarayana* and therefore in the high hope of filling the begging-bowl, I have long looked forward to visiting the historic island. I nearly went there in 1901 but God had willed otherwise. I am a labourer and would love to make the acquaintance of Ceylon labourers to whom Ceylon owes its present condition.

The Ceylon Observer, 7-11-1927

149. TELEGRAM TO N. R. MALKANI

BOMBAY,
November 7, 1927

PROFESSOR MALKANI
NATIONAL COLLEGE
HYDERABAD (SIND)

IF THADANI DISENGAGES YOU MAY DEVOTE ENTIRELY RELIEF.

GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 880

150. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

November 7, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

Though I have nothing to say, I do not want to break the habit of writing to you on Mondays.

I take it that you are making notes from the dairy books you are reading. Now that you are in that line, I would like you to become an expert. You will have to have a mastery over figures too, if you can at all manage it. Only you must not make yourself sick over this or anything else. You will simply do what is fairly within your reach.

You will cultivate Chhotelal. He must get out of his awkwardness and moroseness. It is time he blossomed out.

Find out, too, the cause of Parnerkar's repeated illnesses. He must be well if he is to do much work.

Love,

BAPU

[PS.]

The voyage is very pleasant indeed.

From the original: C.W. 5292. Courtesy: Mirabehn

151. LETTER TO BENARASIDAS CHATURVEDI

November 7, 1927

DEAR BENARASIDASJI,

I received your two letters but could not reply earlier because I was touring.

I am very glad that you have taken up some steady work.

I am writing to the Ashram to dispatch the biography of Garrison available there. You will return it after use.

Yours,

MOHANDAS

[PS.]

It was good that you gave up the trip to Africa.

PANDIT BENARASIDAS CHATURVEDI
91, UPPER CIRCULAR ROAD
CALCUTTA

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2558

152. LETTER TO TULSI MAHER

Kartik Shukla 13 [November 7, 1927][1]

CHI. TULSI MAHER,

I have been able to read your New Year letter only now. We are all aboard the steamship bound for Ceylon. Kakasaheb too is with us. I am very happy to watch the good progress of your work and your delight. Ceylon will take about two weeks. After that Utkal, then Madras and the Ashram in January. I stayed

[1] From the reference to Gandhiji's voyage to Ceylon

in the Ashram for two days. There is a lot of malaria there. Devdas was operated upon for piles. He is well now.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. TULSI MAHER
CHARKHA PRACHARAK
NEPAL

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6532

153. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

Monday [November 7, 1927][1]

CHI. GANGABEHN (SENIOR),

Ramibehn accidentally met me in the train. She travelled with me from Mehmedabad to Nadiad. She talked about you all the time. She feels unhappy because you do not look after the children. I told her that, if the children were entrusted to you on your conditions and if no one interfered with you afterwards, you would certainly agree to take charge of them. She had nothing to say to this. I am sure you write to her from time to time. Her ideals are good. At present, she devotes all her time to acquiring knowledge of the letters.

See that you do not flee from the responsibility which has come upon you. It is now that the knowledge and experience you have gained are being tested. With patience, good temper and generosity of heart, you will be able to overcome all difficulties. Just as the sea accepts the water of all rivers within itself, purifies it and gives it back again, so you too, if you make yourself as the sea, will be able to accept all people. As the sea makes no distinction between good rivers and bad, but purifies all, so one person, whose heart is purified and enlarged with non-violence and truth, can contain everything in that heart and it will not overflow or lose its serenity. Remember that you aim at being such a person.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 8706. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

[1] From *Bapuna Patro–6: G. S. Gangabehnne*, p. 13

154. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Silence Day, November 7, 1927

SISTERS,

I am writing this letter on board a steamer. It will be posted after two days, but since I always write to you on Mondays, I am doing so today.

This time I spent two very busy days in the Ashram. I felt tired, but I did not like to leave the Ashram.

You must have observed that your responsibilities are growing day by day. None of you should lose heart. Remain absorbed in your duties, and try to get peace even where there is none. Our joy must lie in our devotion to duty, and not in the success of our efforts or in the fact that circumstances are favourable. Narasinh Mehta has said: "If man had the power to do everything, no one would be unhappy, for he would destroy his enemies and allow only friends to live." But man is a lowly creature. He becomes great only when he surrenders his ego and becomes one with God. A drop, if separated from the ocean, serves no useful purpose; but staying in the ocean, it shares in bearing on its bosom the heavy burden of this huge steamer. In the same way, if we learn to be one with the Ashram, and thereby with the world and with God, we may be said to be bearing the burden of the world. But in such a state, the 'I' or 'you' ceases to be and only 'That' remains.

As the steamer is only a cargo steamer, it is very quiet.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3675

155. LETTER TO V. L. PHADKE

Monday [November 7, 1927][1]

BHAI MAMA,

It was only yesterday that I could read your article on the Antyaja Ashram at Vartej. I am writing this letter on board a ship bound for Ceylon. Since the article is very old now, I am not sending it to be printed in its present form. I shall see what should be done about it when there is an opportunity for writing about the *Antyaja* movement. How are things with you? Kaka is with me. My health is good enough.

11-21 Colombo

22-25 Jaffna

After that Orissa, and then Madras—at the time of the Congress Session.

Vandemataram from
BAPU

SJT. MAMASAHEB PHADKE
ANTYAJA ASHRAM
GODHRA, B.B. & C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3819

[1] From the postmark

156. LETTER TO G. N. KANITKAR

ON WAY TO LANKA,
November 8, 1927

MY DEAR KANITKAR,

I have gone through the report you left with me. It makes interesting reading. I hope that you will realize all the expectations raised in the report and that you will succeed in your attempt at turning out the best and the cheapest wheel.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 961. Courtesy: Gajanan Kanitkar

157. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

Tuesday, Kartak Sud 14 [November 8, 1927][1]

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I am writing this letter aboard a boat. I had duly received your long letter.

I felt that I need not have been called to Delhi. I think that it was not right to have called the others too. The Viceroy did not wish to know others' views; he wished only to express his own. I am not surprised by this strange procedure. It merely reflects the condition of the country.

Your remedy for the Hindu-Muslim problem is worse than the disease. If even the ordinary law is applied in a straightforward manner, many of the quarrels which occur today would stop. The problem was discussed at some length. I don't believe that unity between the warring factions can be brought about by declaring martial law. If it were not the policy of the Government to maintain its power by setting the two communities against each other, the Hindu-Muslim problem would hardly last a few months. The two communities would fight it out and then come to an understanding. But that is a long story.

[1] On this date Gandhiji was on board S. S. *Colaba* bound for Ceylon.

I think it would be good for you to go away somewhere to rest in order to improve your health—rest not from work but from worries.

I shall spend 15 days in Ceylon. After that, that is, on the 26th of this month, I shall leave for Orissa, from where I shall go to Madras during Christmas and then return to the Ashram in January. The Kathiawar Parishad[1] is likely to be held about the 15th or the 14th of January.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 3218. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

158. WAS IT A FAILURE?

Repeatedly does one read in the papers that non-co-operation was a perfect failure. Several courteous critics often apologetically broach the question in conversations, and gently tell me that the country would have made great progress if I had not led it astray by my ill-conceived non-co-operation. I should not refer to this subject, which may be said to have no bearing on the politics of the day, but for my belief that non-co-operation has come to us as an active force that may assume a universal form any moment, and but for the purpose of reassuring those who are bravely holding on in the face of criticism and scepticism. Let me, however, admit the dangerous half-truth that non-co-operation entirely failed the moment it became violent. Indeed, non-co-operation and violence are here contradictory terms. It is a living belief that violence lived on itself and it required counter-violence for its daily maintenance that gave rise to non-violent non-co-operation. The fact, therefore, is that the moment non-co-operation became violent it lost its vitality and nation-building character. But in so far as it was and remained non-violent, it was a demonstrably complete success. The mass awakening that took place in 1920 all of a sudden was perhaps the greatest demonstration of the efficacy of non-violence. The Government has lost prestige never to be regained. Titles, law-courts, educational institutions no longer inspire the awe they did in 1920. Some of the best lawyers in the country have given up law for ever as a profession and are happy for having accepted

[1] The Kathiawar Political Conference

comparative poverty as their lot. The few national schools and colleges that remain are giving a good account of themselves, as witness the great organization that came into being in Gujarat when the floods turned into a waste what was once a rich garden. But for the students and teachers of national institutions and other non-co-operators the timely help that the afflicted peasantry of Gujarat received and so much needed would never have been at its disposal. It is possible to multiply illustrations of this character and prove that wherever there is real national life, a bond between the classes and the masses in India, non-co-operation is the cause of it.

Take again the three constructive items of the programme. Khadi is a growing factor in national regeneration and is serving over 1,500 villages through an army of nearly two thousand workers and is giving tangible productive relief to over fifty thousand spinners and at least ten thousand weavers, printers, dyers, dhobis and other artisans. Untouchability is a waning thing just struggling for existence. Hindu-Muslim unity of 1920-21 showed its vast possibilities. The violence, deceit, falsehood and the like that mark the rupture between the two great communities today are no doubt ugly signs, but they are a demonstration of crude self-consciousness. The process of churning that the movement of non-co-operation was and is has brought the dirt to the surface. And if non-violent non-co-operation is a living and purifying force, it will presently bring to view the pure unity that is invisibly forming itself under the very visible dirt that obtrudes itself on our gaze today. It is therefore clear to me as daylight that real swaraj, whenever it comes to us, will have to be not a donation rained on us from London, but a prize earned by hard and health-giving non-co-operation with organized forces of evil.

Young India, 10-11-1927

159. LETTER TO HARJIVAN KOTAK

ON THE BOAT "KAVERIMBA",
November 10, 1927

One should feel worried and ashamed even if there is involuntary discharge only once. It is certain that such discharge is the result of impure desires. I was told recently that a person who suffers from constipation may also get it. This is true, but constipation is also the result of impure desires. A man or woman who is free from such desires will not eat even a grain too much of food. Such persons never suffer from constipation.

But, then, there are two kinds of worry, one necessary and uplifting and another unnecessary and tending to drag us down. Despite worry and shame, we would remain cheerful if our lapse was not intentional or if we did not take pleasure in it. Such worry may also be called vigilance. The second kind of worry is the remorse one feels afterwards though one had taken pleasure in the lapse when it occurred. Such worry preys upon one's mind and yet one sinks even deeper into the vice. A person who worries in this sense gets involuntary discharges more and more frequently, whereas the man who exercises vigilance gets them less and less frequently. You will perhaps understand now that a man who gets involuntary discharges cannot afford to remain unconcerned. He should sincerely strive to overcome his impure desires. If he can remain free from them during waking hours, he should not be frightened by involuntary discharges but should take them as a warning that impure desires are secretly eating him up from within, and he should ceaselessly struggle to save himself from them. If, despite his efforts, he cannot stop the discharges, he may have patience but ought not to give up the struggle. I am myself not completely free from involuntary discharges. There was a period in my life when I remember to have remained free from them for many years but after I came to India and started taking milk they became more frequent. There are other causes besides milk. The atmosphere here revived memories of early life. There will be a chapter on this in the Autobiography. Read it.

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

160. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL

Kartak Vad 1 [November 10, 1927][1]

BHAISHRI DAHYABHAI,

I had your letter. I am going to Ceylon by sea and, having got some free time, am trying to overtake my correspondence. I could pay an unexpected visit to the Ashram for two days. With ceaseless effort, the ego is bound to melt away. Do come and see me when I return to the Ashram in January.

Blessings from
BAPU

BHAISHRI DAHYABHAI
DISTRICT CONGRESS COMMITTEE
DHOLKA, B.B. & C.I. RLY.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2699. Courtesy: Dahyabhai M. Patel

161. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

AS AT SABARMATI,
S. S. "CHINKOA"
November 11, 1927

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

It seems I have not written to you for ages. And it so appears because I have been having a glorious voyage from Bombay to Colombo. We reach there only tonight and I am dictating this on a cargo boat. I see that there is nothing like a cargo boat for quiet or for time for doing work if it is a clean boat. From Bombay to Tuticorin we had a very big, new, clean boat with ample room for moving about. I have changed into another cargo boat at Tuticorin in order to gain a day. It is also comfortable but not so roomy.

Well, I have seen the Viceroy.[2] I might not have gone at all but according to my wont I did not want to say a flat 'no'. We did not discuss khaddar but he has promised to invite me again

[1] The year is inferred from the reference to Gandhiji's voyage to Ceylon.
[2] For reports of Gandhi-Irwin meeting, *vide* Appendix V.

for that discussion specially. He had in front of him the essay you have sent him. He is a good man with no power.[1]

I saw Ramchandran at Delhi and talked to him about the man you want for Jamshedpur. I was not able to see him for he was at Lahore. I am therefore unable to guide you. Ramchandran considers him to be a good man. Did you see Tehalramani? What did you think of him?

My programme having been interrupted owing to the Delhi visit I cannot be in Orissa on the 20th instant as I had expected to be. I must give about a fortnight to Ceylon. I shall, therefore, have to leave Ceylon for Orissa at the latest on the 26th or the 27th instant and reach there by the quickest route.

I hope your hand is now in perfect [working or][2] der. Kaka, Pyarelal and Jamnadas[3] are with me besides Ba and Mahadev. And Rajagopalachari and Subayya are waiting for me in Colombo.

I told you that Devdas had an operation for piles. He must have been discharged on the 8th.

With love,

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2624

162. *LETTER TO V. A. SUNDARAM*

November 12, 1927

MY DEAR SUNDARAM,

This voyage has given me a little time to overtake correspondence. I was thankful to hear of Savitri's safe delivery and her presenting you with a daughter. May the baby prosper. I hope Mother is quite well.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 3177

[1] The Viceroy wrote to his father describing his first meeting with Gandhiji: "I have broken the ice and met Gandhi. He really is an interesting personality. . . . He struck me as singularly remote from practical politics. It was rather like talking to someone who had stepped off another planet on to this for a short visit of a fortnight and whose whole mental outlook was quite other to that which was regulating most of the affairs on the planet to which he had descended" (*Life of Lord Halifax*, pp. 246-7).

[2] The source is damaged here.

[3] Youngest son of Khushalchand Gandhi, Gandhiji's cousin

163. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

ON BOARD SHIP TO COLOMBO,
November 12, 1927

CHI. NARANDAS,

Your letter of 16-10-27 is lying with me. I am replying to it in the ship which is carrying me to Colombo. You are right in what you say about the President and the Secretary. But such rules can be adopted only when an institution is running like an efficient machine. So long as we have not reached that condition, we should be content with what work we can smoothly do; only then will the institution take root. You may question me further when I arrive there in January. We shall certainly settle the Kathiawar matter then.

I suppose you know that Jamnadas is with me.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. NARANDAS GANDHI
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 7713. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

164. AN ILL-MATCHED UNION OR CHILD-SLAUGHTER

The facts that have come to my knowledge regarding the ill-matched union that has taken place or is about to take place in Dhrangadhra State remind me of the essays on this subject which I read forty years ago. It is a matter of regret that such unions can take place even today.

The culprit in this case is a Brahmin servant of Dhrangadhra State. His name is Shri Keshavlal Damodar Bhatt. He is a revenue officer at Charadva. He is about fifty-five years old. He has three daughters. Four years ago he lost his wife and, now with the intention of remarrying, he has got himself engaged to a girl thirteen or fourteen years old.

The eldest son-in-law of this Keshavlal has sent me the correspondence that he had with the latter on this subject, in the hope that I would write something about it in *Navajivan* which might perhaps have some salutary effect on the old man or make him

feel ashamed. As there is still time to wake up, let him do so and save himself from the great sin of child-slaughter.

Bhartrihari has stated from his own experience that those who seek the gratification of their desires know neither fear nor shame. If this lustful old father of three daughters has some fear or shame instilled in him in some manner, that young girl who is fit to sit in his lap as his grand-daughter will surely be saved.

Bhattji wrote the following letter[1] to his son-in-law on the 6th of October:

Prabha is Bhattji's youngest daughter and this good man has thought of remarriage at this advanced age only because he might feel lonely when she gets married. However, almost every one of his letters gives proof of his lust.

This elderly man, who, blinded by his lust, is about to remarry, exhibits his own hopes in greater detail in his second letter[2].

We find from this letter that Bhattji regards this betrothal as an auspicious deed. He informs his son-in-law of his desire to dress his child wife in a *chundari*[3] made of Japanese silk, with checks in it—*chundari* of the same kind that was presented to Prabha, and he expects his eldest daughter Jeevi to perform the auspicious ceremony of presenting that *chundari* to his child wife.

However, both his elder daughters and his eldest son-in-law are against this sinful marriage and oppose it, and the latter requests his father-in-law to save himself from this sin. In reply to this, Bhattji writes to say as follows:[4]

Thus the rope remains twisted even when it burns. Even now, if the daughters and the son-in-law withhold help in this sinful act, Bhattji may save himself from the crime of child-slaughter, Dhrangadhra will be saved and so will the whole of India.

A strong public opinion is the only means to prevent such wicked deeds. In this case public opinion is represented by old Keshavlal's son-in-law, his daughters, people of his caste and his other neighbours. All these persons should not lose hope; they should plead with Bhattji with firmness and courtesy. The would-be bride's father, too, should be persuaded to desist from slaying his own child. If, in this manner, Bhattji does not receive any co-operation from anyone, this evil deed may yet be prevented from materializing.

Bhattji and those other old widowers like him who cannot control their lust should think of the plight of innumerable widows.

[1] & [2] Not translated here

[3] A silken sari for ceremonial occasions

[4] The letter is not translated here.

The sex instinct is equally strong in men and women. Can the widowers not exercise self-control by thinking of widows leading lives of purity?

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 13-11-1927

165. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

November 13, 1927

Q. Your photographs belie you. Is it that you refuse to smile when you are photographed?

A. I never have myself photographed.

Q. I wonder whether they make your photographs from drawings!

A. Only the photographers know it.

[Asked about the progress of khadi, Gandhiji said:]

I have met with a fair amount of success.

Q. Do you think that the charkha will ultimately remedy the evils of industrialism?

A. So far as India is concerned, I have hoped in faith. I am hoping in faith that the charkha will be universal in India, and that it will correct many evils of industrialism.

[Asked for an expression of opinion on the Simon Commission, Gandhiji said:]

So far as I am concerned, my conscience in this matter is in the keeping of the President of the National Congress, and the Congress in general.

Q. If you are dissatisfied, would you advise a boycott?

A. I have no opinion in the matter, except that of the leaders of the Congress.

Q. Are you prepared to abide by whatever decision they make?

A. Yes, I shall accept it and if I cannot endorse it, I shall not resist it.

Q. Do you think the peace efforts of statesmen will be successful or do you think that the world is heading for another war?

A. It is a difficult question to answer. Appearances go to show that the world is preparing for another war, but one must hope that it may be possible to avoid it.

The Ceylon Daily News, 14-11-1927

166. SPEECH TO CHETTIAR COMMUNITY, COLOMBO

November 13, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for all those purses[1] that you have presented to me in this eminently business-like manner. I feel again like standing in Chettinad. The very pleasant recollections that I have of my recent visit to Chettinad have become vivid and fresh before me this afternoon. Their generosity and kindness I shall never forget and you here in Colombo are but repeating all that I witnessed in Chettinad. The only consolation that I have in receiving all these gifts and kindness from you is that it is all being done for the sake of *Daridranarayana*; and seeing that I regard myself as but a humble trustee for the millions of paupers of India I not only feel no shame or humiliation in receiving these gifts, but I feel impelled by your generosity and kindness to ask for more. Rich and generous though you may be it is really not possible for any single corporation to fill the millions of mouths of *Daridranarayana* and if there are any of you who have not given at all or given in a miserly fashion I appeal to you to open out your purses and give as much as you can on behalf of *Daridranarayana*. I can conceive of no better investment for wealthy Indians whether in India or outside; and let not your generosity end with merely giving money. If you will establish a living bond with these dumb millions you must wear khadi. It is produced by the hands of those starving men. If you will continue on these lines you will find that it will become necessary for you, if you are to have that bond continuously with the dumb millions, to purify your lives. And, wherever there is pure love there is charity and wherever there is personal purity there immediately arises cohesion in that society. You will find that one step in your advancement towards purity leads on to another.

You are in what might be considered a strange land. Geographically and officially speaking Ceylon is not considered part of India. You, as merchants living in this hospitable land, are expected to behave towards the indigenous population in an exemplary and honest manner. By your conduct will be judged the conduct of the millions of India. I hope, therefore, that your dealings with the people of this fair island are absolutely just and

[1] For the Khadi Fund collections in Ceylon, *vide* Appendix I.

free from all reproach. Let your scales be absolutely correct, your accounts accurate, and, I hope that you regard every woman in this island as your sister, your daughter or your mother. Let possession of wealth not render us giddy. It must carry with it greater sense of responsibility if it is to be a blessing to the possessor and those from whom it is earned.

I must not detain you any longer. I have hardly commenced my work in Ceylon yet. In the course of my tour in this island I shall have many things to speak about and I would like you to follow whatever I might have to say in the different places where I may be taken and nothing will please me better than to find that when I have gone out of this island you have not forgotten the things that I may lay before you from the deepest recesses of my heart.

I thank you once more for all these generous presents and if there are any who want to pay they are at liberty to do so. Let me also inform you that if you want khadi you can get it at the place where I have been accommodated. May God bless you!

The Ceylon Daily News, 14-11-1927 and *With Gandhiji in Ceylon*

167. SPEECH AT VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, COLOMBO

November 13, 1927

I thank you for your address and your purse. During the short time I had at my disposal I tried to glance through the report of the work of your Society and I beg to tender to you my congratulations on its many activities. Vivekananda is a name to conjure with. He has left on India's life an indelible impress and you will find at the present time societies named after him in many parts of India; and this is apart from the many branches of the Rama Krishna Mission.

But I see that I must not keep you long at this meeting. There are impatient crowds waiting outside. All that I would say at the present moment is that I wish every prosperity to this Society, and may I suggest that your activities will be incomplete unless you add to these the one thing that renders service to *Daridranarayana*? Your purse to me is a token of your appreciation of the message of the spinning-wheel. If Vivekananda is the name of your Society, you dare not neglect India's starving millions, and the conviction is daily being driven home that without the spinning-wheel it is impossible to serve the starving millions of India. I have therefore no hesitation in making an appeal to the Indians, whe-

ther they are living in India or outside, that they should carry with them on their persons an emblem of the living bond between themselves and the starving millions in their motherland.

I wish to say to my sisters on the right and the fashionable Indians living in Colombo, or for the matter of that in all Ceylon, that it is now possible, after six years of continued activity, to give you all the fineness you can reasonably desire, even in khaddar.

I pray to you that you will not despise the little service it is possible for you to render to these starving millions of your countrymen and women by wearing khaddar, rather than foreign and mill-made cloth.

I thank you once more for your address.

The Ceylon Daily News, 14-11-1927 and *With Gandhiji in Ceylon*

168. LETTER TO SURENDRA

Sunday [On or after *November 13, 1927*][1]

CHI. SURENDRA,

I got your letter. Devdas was taken ill on the way. This led to some delay in Bombay, but I think now he would have reached Wardha. If you can get away from there by all means go to Wardha and comfort him as much as you can. You would naturally want to go to him and I don't want to stop you from it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9411

169. INTERVIEW TO "THE TIMES OF CEYLON"

COLOMBO,
[On or before *November 14, 1927*][2]

Gandhiji, interviewed by *The Times of Ceylon*, said that his attitude towards the Statutory Commission would be determined by the Congress.

As regards boycott, he said it was his personal opinion as an individual that an active and general boycott would be an effective answer to the British Government.

[1] The letter seems to have been written after Devdas's discharged from the hospital on November 8, 1927; *vide* "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 11-11-1927.

[2] The report of the interview was published under this date.

Asked if he honestly believed that India would be happier if the British got out altogether, Gandhiji is reported to have said that he believed that the only solution of the problems, not only in India but also in Africa, was that it was better if the English remained as friends. India, he admitted, had internecine strife, but in the result India would ultimately free herself. There would be no half-way house.

Replying to another question, Gandhiji explained that non-co-operation was aimed at the forces of evil. Concluding, he declared:

We want friendship, but we do not want a master.

The Hindu, 15-11-1927

170. CABLE TO DHANGOPAL MUKERJEE

[November 14, 1927][1]

DHANGOPAL MUKERJEE
CARE
MRS. WALLER BORDEN
1020, LAKESHORE DRIVE
CHICAGO

YOUR CABLE. INDIAN LEADERS' PROTEST WHICH "TIMES" REFUSED PUBLISH WIDELY PRINTED IN INDIAN PAPERS. "MOTHER INDIA" IS DISTORTED ONE-SIDED PICTURE CONTAINS PALPABLE FALSEHOODS WILD EXAGGERATIONS SUPPRESSION RELEVANT FACTS. MANY WHOSE CONVERSATIONS AUTHORESS CLAIMS QUOTE HAVE PUBLICLY REPUDIATED THEM. BELIEF NOT UNWARRANTED DAILY GROWING THAT BOOK INSPIRED BY PEOPLE INTERESTED IN DEGRADING INDIA IN PUBLIC ESTIMATION IN WEST. MANY WELL-KNOWN ENGLISHMEN AMERICAN AND ENGLISH MISSIONARIES OF LONG EXPERIENCE HAVE REPUDIATED AND CONDEMNED BOOK.[2]

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 12551

[1] From an entry in the source and the reference to Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* which was published in 1927.

[2] In his reply dated 17-11-1927 the addressee informed Gandhiji of a Lecture Bureau's invitation to Sarojini Naidu to visit U.S.A. on a lecture tour to repair the damage done by Miss Mayo's book.

171. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

November 14, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I got your two letters.

I liked the voyage very much and wished I had more of it.

I leave Ceylon definitely on 29th instant. The first place to reach in Orissa will be Berhampur, Ganjam District. There are two routes: *via* Calcutta, *via* Raichur-Bezwada. I do not know which is cheaper or better. You will look up and decide. Surendra is familiar with both the routes, I fancy. I expect to reach Berhampur on 2nd December. So there won't be a month in Orissa as I had expected.

Your programme for cutting off the quantity of cloth required is drastic. You may have that for indoors but perhaps not for all occasions. The sari may be necessary for the very work you have to do. But I do not know. Let us hasten slowly. Anyway, I shall not interfere with your wishes in this matter.

Surround Bhansali with all the affection you can and let the latter work its way. Affection may succeed where argument fails.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5293. Courtesy: Mirabehn

172. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

COLOMBO,
Silence Day, November 14, 1927

SISTERS,

We reached Colombo on Saturday. I expected a letter from one or other of you, today being Monday. But it has not come yet.

This is a very pleasant land. Though it is outside India, it is exactly like it. Indians here are mostly from the South. The local inhabitants do not look very different from them. Women's dress here is very simple; in fact it may be said that men and women dress practically in the same way. Both put on dhotis in the manner in which Surendra does. Only, the dhotis here are dyed

and have various designs on them. Both wear jackets, though there is a slight difference in cut. Women are never without jackets, whereas men are content often to come out with only dhotis on. Malabar has also similar dress, only the dhotis there are not dyed. These clothes are bound to be very cheap. Only if people in these two States begin to take a liking for khaddar, there will be no difficulty for them to adopt it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3676

173. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, COLOMBO

November 15, 1927

CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I want first of all to apologize to you for not standing up to speak to you. For years past I have been unable to address audiences standing; so you will not consider it discourteous on my part if I address you sitting and that I have not received your address standing. I am sorry also that at the present moment I have not a voice that would carry far, and I have also to apologize to you and to the citizens of Colombo for not having arrived here in time. But for that the blame must rest on stronger shoulders. I refer to His Excellency the Viceroy. It was he who invited me to go to Delhi, and if you want to pass a vote of censure on His Excellency the Viceroy I will certainly join you. But perhaps you will excuse His Excellency and, through him, me also.

The second cause of my delay was that I came as a passenger on two cargo boats and in spite of the efforts of the captains and the officers to bring me here as soon as they ever could, you will understand the limitations that are imposed upon cargo boats. Cargo boats have got to take care of their cargo rather than the passengers, who are interlopers.

It is a matter of great pleasure to me to receive this address at your hands. I was totally unprepared for it. Mine, if you will like to take it so, is a mercenary visit. I have come to Ceylon in reply to invitations from some of my own countrymen, and I have devoted this year which is about to expire to getting collections on behalf of the cause which is designed to serve millions of paupers in India. The temptation that these friends gave me was irresistible.

I very nearly came to this pearl among the islands of the world in 1901. You may not know that I have many Mussalman friends in South Africa. They are dear to me as life itself, and some of them urged me to come to Colombo on my way to India, and I would gladly have done so then, and then I would have come as a sojourner in your midst to appreciate the unrivalled beauties of this very beautiful island and to enjoy also your open hospitality. But I cannot say the same today; so that I was not prepared for this address because I hardly deserve it at the present moment.

But I am a lover of municipal life, and although it never fell to my lot to serve a municipality as a councillor, I came as a citizen into the closest touch with two great Corporations. I mean the Corporation of Durban and the Corporation of Johannesburg. And if you were to ask the mayors of these two Corporations, they will perhaps testify that I served them as much as a single citizen, humble like myself, could possibly do.

I consider it a great privilege for a person to serve any place where he has cast his lot. I have since been studying the methods of great Corporations throughout India, more or less closely, and I have been in search of an ideally conducted municipality in the East. I must confess to you that I have not yet found one in my own country. I should love to think that you are that ideal Corporation. But I am unable to say anything owing to my great ignorance of your achievements.

Yesterday I asked for a copy of the latest report of your administration, but it was not possible for me to go through the whole of that interesting document.

Having done spadework myself both in Durban and Johannesburg, I turned to pages referring to the plague and it gave me something of a shock when I read in those paragraphs that you were not yet immune from that curse. These two corporations, Durban and Johannesburg, had also their share of the plague. In Johannesburg it was of a most virulent type, but the Municipal Councillors counted no cost too great to protect the citizens against any further inroads. I won't take you into the very interesting history of how Johannesburg battled against the plague. Durban also did likewise, and it was in that connection that I had an opportunity of reading the very wonderful history of the Corporation of Glasgow and how Glasgow poured money like water in order to make that great city plague-proof. And it succeeded. I don't know that since that one visitation Glasgow has had another. I am speaking under correction, but I hope that

my impression is absolutely correct. I can say from first-hand knowledge of Johannesburg that Johannesburg has not had that visitation again. Of course, it has got a climate probably second to none in the world which is in its favour but the manliness of its citizens also stands out to its credit.

As you know Johannesburg is a cosmopolitan city. It has a great Bantu population, and it has its share of the Indian population. It has also its ghettos, and still Johannesburg is immune.

Here I have found that your difficulty was with the Harbour Master—that it is too expensive to disinfect all the grain that comes or passes through this beautiful harbour of yours. I say that this Corporation should fight against these interests in order to make this city absolutely free from plague, and to invest passing visitors like me with a sense of perfect freedom. My medical adviser would tell me: 'In your dilapidated condition you must not go to a place like Colombo'—and if I was inclined to listen to my medical advisers I would not have come if I had read a report of that character before I came here.

The second thing I was reading in this interesting document was about your dairies. . . .

I notice that you import dried milk from New Zealand. You are finding room for dried constituents of milk, and, if I am to speak in that special language, you reassemble the constituents and sell that liquid but it appears under the name of milk. I wonder that your medical officer passes the stuff as milk at all. I was sent by friends whilst I was having my convalescence in the Nandi Hills a book on vitamins, and if these writers and distinguished specialists are truthful, they tell us lay people that milk is robbed of its vitamins when subjected to a certain temperature. I know something of the constituents of dried milk and I know that milk loses its vitamins when it reaches that dry stage. When you rob milk of its vitamins you rob it of half its richness. You have many dairies here. I want to throw out a suggestion here. You have inspectors, you have bye-laws, and you have some prosecutions. Why go through all this trouble and why not municipalize your dairies and take control of your milk supply, and, believe me, you will then conserve the health of your babies and you will conserve also the health of an old and dilapidated man like myself. I have no doubt that you have in Colombo very old men and that they stand in need of milk, and there is a very great labouring population for whom milk should be cheap. It should be standardized like your stamps, and the people should be able to get their milk absolutely guaranteed. And if you want to do

that you cannot do better than municipalize your milk supply and make it accessible to the poorest man in Colombo.

The third thing and I have done. I know that you have got a very beautiful harbour. I have passed through your cinnamon gardens, a credit to any city in the world. I have noticed some of your palatial buildings. They are very good indeed. But then do the dwellers in cinnamon gardens or those who reside in this city and do business in it require trustees to look after their welfare? I fancy not. They are trustees for those who cannot look after themselves. They are trustees, therefore, for the welfare of the labouring population.

I have not yet been able to visit your slums to be able to say at first hand what the condition of these slums is. But if you are able to tell me that your slums will be just as sweet-smelling as cinnamon gardens I will take it on trust and will advertise your city throughout my wanderings and I will say: "Go to Colombo if you want to see an ideal municipality." But I hardly think that you will be able to get a certificate of merit from me. I refer to the condition of your slums. I have been going through some statistics about your labouring classes.

I think a place like Colombo which is certainly dry in one respect can easily afford to go dry in another respect. And if you, the trustees for the welfare of the citizens of Colombo, will make Colombo dry if it is really possible for you to do so, you will earn the thanks not only of the citizens of Colombo and the thanks of a humble individual like myself, but the thanks of all Eastern municipalities.

May God help you to lead the way in the direction I have indicated. I thank you once more for the address that you have so kindly presented to me.

The Ceylon Observer, 15-11-1927 and *With Gandhiji in Ceylon*

174. SPEECH AT ANANDA COLLEGE, COLOMBO

November 15, 1927

MR. PRINCIPAL, TEACHERS AND BOYS,

It has given me great pleasure to be able to come to Colombo and Ceylon and to make your acquaintance. Wherever I go I love to see school children.

Here in Ceylon the majority of the boys come under the influence of Buddhist teaching. That great Master taught us what is known as the Right Path, and you, boys, come to institutions of this character to learn the Right Path. And to learn the Right Path is not merely to pack our brains with many things that sound nice, good or sweet, but to do the right things. Well, the first maxim of the Right Path is to tell the Truth, to think the Truth and to act the Truth. And the second maxim is to love all that lives. Gautama Buddha was so filled with mercy and kindness that it was he who taught us to love not only the members of the human family but also to love all life, to love all the animal world. And he taught us also personal purity of life. Therefore, if you, boys, are not truthful, are not loving and kind, and not pure in your personal conduct, you have learnt nothing in this institution. And which of the boys will tell me where Gautama Buddha was born?

A very small boy tot who was in front of the Mahatma replied: He was born in Kapilavastu.

MAHATMAJI: And where is Kapilavastu?

THE BOY: It is in India.

MAHATMAJI: Then I suggest to you all, boys, that you owe something to Gautama's countrymen, and I am sorry to have to tell you boys, if you do not know it already, that in the land where Gautama lived and taught, and which he hallowed by his feet, there is dire poverty and distress. One reason why the sacred people of India, the millions of them, are so poor is because they have abandoned their ancient industry or have been deprived of it, I mean the spinning-wheel. Well, now, they can revive the spinning-wheel if everybody in India and others will wear what can be spun and woven from it. That cloth is called khadi.

Now, if you will render something unto Gautama for the great message of mercy that he delivered to you and to my countrymen,

certainly wear khadi. So far as I know all the cloth that you little boys and others have worn has not been produced in Colombo or Ceylon, and seeing that you must buy some cloth in order to cover yourselves it is your primary duty to buy that cloth which is woven by the famishing millions, the countrymen of Gautama. And if you will do so you will then certainly act or begin to act according to the second maxim in the Right Path. What I have told you naturally applies with double force to your teachers and your parents. If you are clever, good and brave boys, you will discuss these things with your teachers and your parents and ask them: "What is it this strange man called Gandhi told you?" And if I am not mistaken they will endorse every word of what I have said to you. You have given this money to me for this very purpose, and I thank you and the teachers for giving me this money thinking of the famishing millions of India. To wear khaddar is merely to follow up the step that you have taken today. May God bless you all.

The Ceylon Daily News, 16-11-1927 and *With Gandhiji in Ceylon*

175. *SPEECH AT NALANDA VIDYALAYA, COLOMBO*

November 15, 1927

MR. PRINCIPAL, TEACHERS AND BOYS,

I thank you very much for giving me this donation for the work which has brought me to this beautiful island. . . .[1]

And I suggest to you that if you will carry out this law of mercy that Buddha taught, and if you will make some return that you owe to Gautama you will, until you are able to produce your own khadi, wear khadi that is manufactured in India. My friend, the translator[2], proudly pointed out that the cloth he was wearing was manufactured in Ceylon. Well, I would prohibit you from buying a single yard of khadi manufactured in India as long as he is able to produce sufficient khadi manufactured in Ceylon, and you would certainly be still followers of the Buddha if you work with your own hands and manufacture khadi. If you will do that you will help the whole world by setting a noble example. But, meanwhile, I suggest to you that you will be doing the right thing and following up the step that you have taken by giving

[1] Then Gandhiji spoke on the message of Buddha and khadi.

[2] J.S.P. Jayawardene, who translated the speech into Sinhalese

this purse if you all wear khadi, teachers and all. I thank you once more for this gift of yours, for inviting me to this school and I pray that God bless you.

The Ceylon Daily News, 16-11-1927 and *With Gandhiji in Ceylon*

176. SPEECH IN REPLY TO BUDDHISTS' ADDRESS[1], COLOMBO

November 15, 1927

I thank you very sincerely for the address that you have given to me. I appreciate the courtesy, in that you have supplied me with a translation of your address in advance. I am equally grateful to His Holiness and the priests for the benediction that they have pronounced just now. I shall always esteem it as a great privilege that I have received this benediction this afternoon, and I can give His Holiness and the priests in the presence of this assembly the assurance that I shall always strive to deserve that benediction. Your address mentions it and His Holiness also just now mentioned the fact about the Buddha Gaya temple which is situated in India. I have been interesting myself in this great institution for a long time, and when I presided over the deliberations of the Indian National Congress at Belgaum,[2] I had the privilege of doing what was possible on behalf of the Congress in this connection. I had sent to me by some unknown friend in Ceylon [a report] of the controversy that took place in connection with what I did at the Congress. I did not think it proper to take part in that controversy nor do I desire even now to go into it. I can only give you my assurance that everything that was humanly possible for me to do to advance your claim I did and I shall still do. I can only tell you, however, that the Congress does not possess the influence that I would like it to possess. There are several difficulties raised in connection with the proprietary rights. There are technical, legal difficulties also in the way. The Congress appointed a Committee of the best men that were at its disposal to go into this matter and if possible even to come to terms with the Mahant who is at the present moment in possession of the temple. That

[1] Presented at the Vidyodaya College by the All-Ceylon Congress of Buddhist Associations

[2] *Vide* Vol. XXV, pp. 544-5.

Committee has already reported, and I take it that some of you have seen the report of that Committee. That Committee endeavoured to have an arbitration appointed, but it failed in its efforts to do so. But there is absolutely no reason to lose hope. However, I can tell you that all my personal sympathies are absolutely with you and, if the rendering of its possession to you was in my giving, you can have it today. In your address was mentioned another temple that is situated in Ceylon. I do not know anything about the controversy regarding this temple. I, therefore, like some of you to give me particulars about it, and tell me if there is anything that I can do in connection with it whilst I am in your midst. You may take it for granted that I should take a personal interest in it if I feel that there is anything that I can do, and I should do so not in order that I can oblige you, but in order to give myself satisfaction.

For, you do not know perhaps that one of my sons, the eldest boy, accused me of being a follower of Buddha, and some of my Hindu countrymen also do not hesitate to accuse me of spreading Buddhistic teaching under the guise of sanatan Hinduism. I sympathize with my son's accusations and the accusations of my Hindu friends. And sometimes I feel even proud of being accused of being a follower of the Buddha, and I have no hesitation in declaring in the presence of this audience that I owe a great deal to the inspiration that I have derived from the life of the Enlightened One. Indeed, at an anniversary celebration in the new Buddha temple that has been erected in Calcutta I gave expression to this view. The leader in that meeting was Angarika Dharmapala. He was weeping over the fact that he was not receiving the response that he desired for the cause which was close to his heart, and I remember having rebuked him for shedding tears. I told the audience that though what passed under the name of Buddhism might have been driven out of India, the life of the Buddha and his teachings were by no means driven out of India. This incident happened, I think, now three years ago, and I have seen nothing since to alter the view which I pronounced at that meeting. It is my deliberate opinion that the essential part of the teachings of the Buddha now forms an integral part of Hinduism. It is impossible for Hindu India today to retrace her steps and go behind the great reformation that Gautama effected in Hinduism. By his immense sacrifice, by his great renunciation and by the immaculate purity of his life he left an indelible impress upon Hinduism, and Hinduism owes an eternal debt of gratitude to that great teacher. And if you will forgive me for saying so, and if

you will also give me the permission to say so, I would venture to tell you that what Hinduism did not assimilate of what passes as Buddhism today was not an essential part of Buddha's life and his teachings.

It is my fixed opinion that Buddhism or rather the teaching of Buddha found its full fruition in India, and it could not be otherwise, for Gautama was himself a Hindu of Hindus. He was saturated with the best that was in Hinduism, and he gave life to some of the teachings that were buried in the Vedas and which were overgrown with weeds. His great Hindu spirit cut its way through the forest of words, meaningless words, which had overlaid the golden truth that was in the Vedas. He made some of the words in the Vedas yield a meaning to which the men of his generation were utter strangers, and he found in India the most congenial soil. And wherever the Buddha went, he was followed and surrounded not by non-Hindus but Hindus, those who were themselves saturated with the Vedic law. But the Buddha's teaching like his heart was all-expanding and all-embracing and so it has survived his own body and swept across the face of the earth. And at the risk of being called a follower of Buddha I claim this achievement as a triumph of Hinduism. Buddha never rejected Hinduism, but he broadened its base. He gave it a new life and a new interpretation. But here comes the point where I shall need your forgiveness and your generosity, and I want to submit to you that the teaching of Buddha was not assimilated in its fulness whether it was in Ceylon, or in Burma, or in China or in Tibet. I know my own limitations. I lay no claim to scholarship in Buddhistic law. Probably, a fifth-form boy from Nalanda Vidyalaya would plough me in a Buddhist catechism. I know that I speak in the presence of very learned priests and equally learned laymen, but I should be false to you and false to myself if I did not declare what my heart believes.

You and those who call themselves Buddhists outside India have no doubt taken in a very large measure the teachings of the Buddha, but when I examine your life and when I cross-question the friends from Ceylon, Burma, China or Tibet, I feel confounded to find so many inconsistencies between what I have come to understand as the central fact of Buddha's life and your own practice, and if I am not tiring you out, I would like hurriedly to run through three prominent points that just now occurred to me. The first is the belief in an all-pervading Providence called God. I have heard it contended times without number and I have read in books also, claiming to express the spirit of Buddhism,

that Buddha did not believe in God. In my humble opinion such a belief contradicts the very central fact of Buddha's teaching. In my humble opinion the confusion has arisen over his rejection, and just rejection, of all the base things that passed in his generation under the name of God. He undoubtedly rejected the notion that a being called God was actuated by malice, could repent of his actions, and like the kings of the earth could possibly be open to temptations and bribes and could possibly have favourites. His whole soul rose in mighty indignation against the belief that a being called God required for His satisfaction the living blood of animals in order that he might be pleased—animals who were his own creation. He, therefore, reinstated God in the right place and dethroned the usurper who for the time being seemed to occupy that White Throne. He emphasized and redeclared the eternal and unalterable existence of the moral government of this universe. He unhesitatingly said that the law was God Himself.

God's laws are eternal and unalterable and not separable from God Himself. It is an indispensable condition of His very perfection. And hence the great confusion that Buddha disbelieved in God and simply believed in the moral law, and because of this confusion about God Himself, arose the confusion about the proper understanding of the great word *nirvana*. *Nirvana* is undoubtedly not utter extinction. So far as I have been able to understand the central fact of Buddha's life, *nirvana* is utter extinction of all that is base in us, all that is vicious in us, all that is corrupt and corruptible in us. *Nirvana* is not like the black, dead peace of the grave, but the living peace, the living happiness of a soul which is conscious of itself, and conscious of having found its own abode in the heart of the Eternal.

The third point is the low estimation in which the idea of sanctity of all life came to be held in its travels outside India. Great as Buddha's contribution to humanity was in restoring God to His eternal place, in my humble opinion greater still was his contribution to humanity in his exacting regard for all life, be it ever so low. I am aware that his own India did not rise to the height that he would fain have seen India occupy. But the teaching of Buddha, when it became Buddhism and travelled outside, came to mean that sacredness of animal life had not the sense that it had with an ordinary man. I am not aware of the exact practice and belief of Ceylonese Buddhism in this matter, but I am aware what shape it has taken in Burma and China. In Burma especially the Burmese Buddhists will not kill a single animal, but do not mind others killing the animals for them and

dishing the carcases for them for their food. Now, if there was any teacher in the world who insisted upon the inexorable law of cause and effect, it was inevitably Gautama, and yet my friends, the Buddhists outside India would, if they could, avoid the effects of their own acts. But I must not put an undue strain upon your patience. I have but lightly touched upon some of the points which I think it my duty to bring to your notice, and in all earnestness and equal humility I present them for your serious consideration.

One thing more and I shall have done. Last night the members of the Reception Committee asked me to speak at one of these audiences of the connection khadi had with Ceylon. I have not left much time for myself to expand this message before you, but I shall try to summarize it in two sentences. One thing is that you who regard Buddha as the ruler of your hearts owe something to the land of his birth, where millions of his descendants for whom he laboured and for whom he died are today living a life of misery, living in a state of perpetual semi-starvation. I venture, therefore, to suggest that khadi enables you to establish a living bond between yourselves and the ruler of your hearts. If you will follow the central fact of his teaching and regard life as one of renunciation of all material things, all life being transitory, you will at once see the beauty of the message of khadi which otherwise means simple living and high thinking. Taking these two thoughts with you, I suggest to every one of you to dot the 'i's and cross the 't's and make out your own interpretation of the message of khadi. I thank you again for the great kindness that you have shown, for the address and for the benediction, and I hope that you have received the humble message that I have given to you in the same spirit in which it has been delivered. Regard it as a message not from a critic, but from a bosom friend.

Young India, 24-11-1927

177. SPEECH AT Y.M.C.A., COLOMBO

November 15, 1927

Addressing a huge gathering in the hall of Y.M.C.A., Colombo, Gandhiji welcomed the occasion as one more instance of the close touch, he was daily finding himself in, with Christians throughout the world [and said:]

There are some who will not even take my flat denial when I tell them that I am not a Christian.

The message of Jesus, as I understand it, is contained in his Sermon on the Mount unadulterated and taken as a whole, and even in connection with the Sermon on the Mount, my own humble interpretation of the message is in many respects different from the orthodox. The message, to my mind, has suffered distortion in the West. It may be presumptuous for me to say so, but as a devotee of truth, I should not hesitate to say what I feel. I know that the world is not waiting to know my opinion on Christianity.

One's own religion is after all a matter between oneself and one's Maker and no one else's, but if I feel impelled to share my thoughts with you this evening, it is because I want to enlist your sympathy in my search for truth and because so many Christian friends are interested in my thoughts on the teachings of Jesus. If then I had to face only the Sermon on the Mount and my own interpretation of it, I should not hesitate to say, 'Oh yes, I am a Christian'. But I know that at the present moment if I said any such thing I would lay myself open to the gravest misinterpretation. I should lay myself open to fraudulent claims because I would have then to tell you what my own meaning of Christianity is, and I have no desire myself to give you my own view of Christianity. But negatively I can tell you that in my humble opinion, much of what passes as Christianity is a negation of the Sermon on the Mount. And please mark my words. I am not at the present moment speaking of Christian conduct. I am speaking of the Christian belief, of Christianity as it is understood in the West. I am painfully aware of the fact that conduct everywhere falls far short of belief. But I don't say this by way of criticism. I know from the treasures of my own experience that although I am every moment of my life trying to live up to my professions, my conduct falls short of these professions. Far therefore be it from me to say this in a spirit of criticism. But I am

placing before you my fundamental difficulties. When I began as a prayerful student to study the Christian literature in South Africa in 1893, I asked myself, 'Is this Christianity?' and have always got the Vedic answer, *neti neti* (not this, not this). And the deepest in me tells me that I am right.

I claim to be a man of faith and prayer, and even if I was cut to pieces, God would give me the strength not to deny Him and to assert that He is. The Muslim says He is and there is no one else. The Christian says the same thing and so the Hindu, and if I may say so, even the Buddhist says the same thing, if in different words. We may each of us be putting our own interpretation on the word God —God Who embraces not only this tiny globe of ours, but millions and billions of such globes. How can we, little crawling creatures, so utterly helpless as He has made us, how could we possibly measure His greatness, His boundless love, His infinite compassion, such that He allows man insolently to deny compassion, such that He allows man insolently to deny Him, wrangle about Him, and cut the throat of his fellow-man? How can we measure the greatness of God Who is so forgiving, so divine? Thus though we may utter the same words they have not the same meaning for us all. And hence I say that we do not need to proselytize or do *shuddhi* or *tabligh* through our speech or writing. We can only do it really with our lives. Let them be open books for all to study. Would that I could persuade the missionary friends to take this view of their mission. Then there will be no distrust, no suspicion, no jealousy and no dissensions.

Gandhiji then took the case of modern China as a case in point. His heart, he said, went out to young China in the throes of a great national upheaval, and he referred to the anti-Christian movement in China, about which he had occasion to read in a pamphlet received by him from the students' department of the Young Women's Christian Association and the Young Men's Christian Association of China. The writers had put their own interpretation upon the anti-Christian movement, but there was no doubt that young China regarded Christian movements as being opposed to Chinese self-expression. To Gandhiji the moral of this anti-Christian manifestation was clear. He said:

Don't let your Christian propaganda be anti-national, say these young Chinese. And even their Christian friends have come to distrust the Christian endeavour that had come from the West. I present the thought to you that these essays written by young men have a deep meaning, a deep truth, because they were themselves trying to justify their Christian conduct in so far as they had been able to live up to the life it had taught them and at

the same time find a basis for that opposition. The deduction I would like you all to draw from this manifestation is that you Ceylonese should not be torn from your moorings, and those from the West should not consciously or unconsciously lay violent hands upon the manners, customs and habits of the Ceylonese in so far as they are not repugnant to fundamental ethics and morality. Confuse not Jesus' teachings with what passes as modern civilization, and pray do not do unconscious violence to the people among whom you cast your lot. It is no part of that call, I assure you, to tear the lives of the people of the East by its roots. Tolerate whatever is good in them and do not hastily, with your preconceived notions, judge them. Do not judge lest you be judged yourselves. In spite of your belief in the greatness of Western civilization and in spite of your pride in all your achievements, I plead with you for humility, and ask you to leave some little room for doubt, in which, as Tennyson sang, there was more truth, though by 'doubt' he no doubt meant a different thing. Let us each one live our life, and if ours is the right life, where is the cause for hurry? It will react of itself.

To you, young Ceylonese friends[1], I say: Don't be dazzled by the splendour that comes to you from the West. Do not be thrown off your feet by this passing show. The Enlightened One has told you in never-to-be-forgotten words that this little span of life is but a passing shadow, a fleeting thing, and if you realize the nothingness of all that appears before your eyes, the nothingness of this material case that we see before us ever changing, then indeed there are treasures for you up above, and there is peace for you down here, peace which passeth all understanding, and happiness to which we are utter strangers. It requires an amazing faith, a divine faith and surrender of all that we see before us. What did Buddha do, and Christ do, and also Mahomed? Theirs were lives of self-sacrifice and renunciation. Buddha renounced every worldly happiness, because he wanted to share with the whole world his happiness which was to be had by men who sacrificed and suffered in search of truth. If it was a good thing to scale the heights of Mt. Everest, sacrificing precious lives in order to be able to go there and make some slight observations, if it was a glorious thing to give up life after life in planting a flag in the uttermost extremities of the earth, how much more glorious would it be to give not one life, surrender not a million lives but a

[1] The Y.M.C.A. had among its members Buddhist as well as Christian youth.

billion lives in search of the potent and imperishable truth? So be not lifted off your feet, do not be drawn away from the simplicity of your ancestors. A time is coming when those who are in the mad rush today of multiplying their wants, vainly thinking that they add to the real substance, real knowledge of the world, will retrace their steps and say: 'What have we done?' Civilizations have come and gone, and in spite of all our vaunted progress I am tempted to ask again and again 'To what purpose?' Wallace, a contemporary of Darwin, has said the same thing. Fifty years of brilliant inventions and discoveries, he has said, has not added one inch to the moral height of mankind. So said a dreamer and visionary if you will—Tolstoy. So said Jesus, and Buddha, and Mahomed, whose religion is being denied and falsified in my own country today.

By all means drink deep of the fountains that are given to you in the Sermon on the Mount, but then you will have to take sackcloth and ashes. The teaching of the Sermon was meant for each and every one of us. You cannot serve both God and Mammon. God the Compassionate and the Merciful, Tolerance-incarnate, allows Mammon to have his nine days' wonder. But I say to you, youth of Ceylon, fly from that self-destroying but destructive show of Mammon.

Young India, 8-12-1927

178. SPEECH AT MISSIONARY CONFERENCE, COLOMBO

November 16, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

You have very kindly lightened my task by letting this meeting know my wishes. I always welcome any invitation to a missionary body and I accept as a flattering compliment to be called a fellow missionary. Perhaps we may not give the same meaning to the word 'missionary'. Nevertheless, I like that compliment. I understand that you have a conference every month where the missionaries of Ceylon or Colombo meet and I understand also that you have anticipated the day of the Conference in order that you may meet me and give me the privilege of meeting you. I appreciate that thoughtfulness also on the part of your Committee and in order to make it really a conference of that nature I would like you to ask me any questions that may occur now. That will really lighten my task. I don't want to give you

any address. I have nothing new to say. I have been speaking to missionary conferences in Calcutta, in Bangalore and I also spoke to missionaries in Madras and I have nothing possibly to add to what I have already said. But it would be much better if you ask me questions arising out of anything that you may have read of my speeches delivered to those conferences or speeches delivered elsewhere on any subject or out of what you might have heard of me and from intimate fellowship that some of you have extended to me; I know that some of you have read about me in the papers. If you extend the same confidence you may ask me anything you like out of what you may have heard about me also and I assure you that I will not take it ill if you ask me questions that might be considered embarrassing in a drawing-room meeting. Let us not have a drawing-room meeting but a meeting between friends who are attempting to be closer friends still and dispel all the mists of misunderstanding.

Continuing, Mahatma Gandhi recalled a hymn that he had heard in Pretoria, "We shall know each other better when the mists have rolled away." Let them see that there were no mists hanging about them.

There was a pause for questions and Mr. G. P. Wishard asked what Mahatma Gandhi thought of the doctrine of the possibility of the forgiveness of sins.

GANDHIJI: That is a very fine question indeed. It is a very old question and naturally occurs to every sinner and as I consider myself to have sinned more often than I have wished—I have certainly never wished to sin—I know how much [need] there is for forgiveness. Some of you have read perhaps even my confessions of the very grievous sins into which I have been led and not once but often, often enough to make any man ashamed of himself. And so, for my own personal satisfaction too I have been obliged to investigate that question. Whether it is my Hindu upbringing or whether it is my close association with some Jain friends, so far as Jainism may be distinguished from Hinduism, whatever the cause might be, I have come to the conclusion, I suppose that is the safest word to use at this time of life, though, of course, it is never too late to mend, that there is no such thing as forgiveness on the part of God as we understand the word 'forgiveness' in mundane matters as a king, for instance, forgives lapses on the part of his subjects. I believe in the eternal nature and the immutability of God's laws. God and His laws, so far as I have been able to understand God's purpose, are not distinguishable as we can and do distinguish between kings,

earthly kings and their laws, and yet in a sense there is a forgiveness which is infinitely more definite than and superior to any forgiveness that may be given by a most forgiving king and that forgiveness is none else than a new heart. It is a definite promise of God which everyone who has the slightest desire can verify for himself or herself and so far as I have been able to see, the process takes place something after this type.

Continuing, Mahatma Gandhi said that if a man became conscious of his guilt and had the desire to wash himself of that guilt he began by prayer and supplication. The words 'prayer' and 'supplication' had a more extended meaning than in a mundane sense and then came a definite consciousness of God Who was within and, if they fulfilled the test that was necessary for that definite change in them and after that change came about, the sinner felt within himself as it were a wall of protection being built for him, but still he would feel that safety not because of any strangeness that he had but because of that living wall of protection which he saw growing in front of him and round him, below him and above him, so that he became sin-proof and guilt-proof.

It was a gradual process but it came to them as if by a sudden miracle and therefore they used the word 'grace' of God. He used that phraseology freely because there was a similar word in Hinduism. It was not taken bodily from the Christian teaching but it was a most familiar thing in all the writings of the Hindu teachers, as distinct from the priests. They had written down their own experiences and that was how they had related their experiences. He did not mind how he had arrived at that process. If he had arrived at that process from his very close Christian contact, he would be delighted, or if he had come to that conclusion from his Hindu upbringing, he would still be delighted. His own purpose was to find if there could be escape from his sins, some escape from the crushing weight of that sinfulness, and therefore he felt that it was a gradual process till it came to such a fulness that they began to recognize it and then they said there was a sudden change, but personally he did not believe in a sudden change. There was really no such thing as a miracle in God's universe which was governed by definite laws which were unalterable. But seeing that they did not understand all those laws and seeing that God's processes were so mysterious and beyond their reasoning faculty, it was necessary for them to exercise patience and then they would be justified in calling it a miracle, but seeing the whole process in cold blood he did not think that God worked by a series of miracles and if he was right that the process was a gradual change then there were two things that went on in their own selves. One was that definite striving minute after minute, second after second, making persistent effort; and in the second place a definite recognition of their utter helplessness without the help of that quickening spirit

that revivified them and which he would call God. Thus, there was the help which they called the grace of God on one side and on the other side human effort, however, infinitesimal it might be. The two processes went on side by side.[1]

Gandhiji explained at length how there could be no forgiveness like the forgiveness that a criminal prays for and gets from an earthly king. It was a question of a change of heart brought about by true contrition and ceaseless striving for purification. In this connection Gandhiji referred to the case of the Plymouth Brother. . .[2] [and said:]

But the Plymouth Brother I met argued that there was no such thing as human effort. If you accept the fact of crucifixion sinfulness would go altogether. I was astounded as I knew and was intimate with quite a number of Christian friends who were making a definite effort. "Don't you fall?" I asked him. "Yes," he said, "but my strength comes from the fact that Jesus intercedes for me and washes my sins away." Well, I tell you, the Quaker friend who had introduced me to the Plymouth Brother felt no less astounded. Asking for forgiveness means that we should not sin again, and the grant of forgiveness means that we would have power to resist all temptation. It is only after a persistent, untiring effort that God comes to our rescue as a wall of protection and there is a growing consciousness that we shall not sin. In a famous controversy with Huxley, I remember Gladstone having said that when the definite grace of God was pledged to us we became incapable of sin. Jesus was incapable of sin from birth, Gladstone said, but we could be such by constant striving. So long as there is a single evil thought coming to our mind, we must conclude that there is not complete forgiveness nor grace.

[Asked if Gandhiji's position in matters of faith was not like living in a sort of half-way house, he replied:]

I certainly admire the friend who made that criticism but he may be sure that there is no half-way house for me. I have been described as an intolerable wholehogger. I know that friends get confused when I say I am a sanatani Hindu and they fail to find in me things they associate with a man usually labelled as such. But that is because in spite of my being a staunch Hindu I find room in my faith for Christian and Islamic and Zoroastrian teaching, and therefore my Hinduism seems to some to be a

[1] What follows is from "Ceylon Memoirs" by Mahadev Desai, published in *Young India*, 22-12-1927.

[2] *Vide An Autobiography*, Pt. II, Ch. XI.

conglomeration and some have even dubbed me an eclectic. Well, to call a man eclectic is to say that he has no faith, but mine is a broad faith which does not oppose Christians —not even a Plymouth Brother—not even the most fanatical Mussalman. It is a faith based on the broadest possible toleration. I refuse to abuse a man for his fanatical deeds, because I try to see them from his point of view. It is that broad faith that sustains me. It is a somewhat embarrassing position, I know, —but to others, not to me!

The Ceylon Daily News, 17-11-1927 and *Young India*, 22-12-1927

179. SPEECH TO LABOUR UNION, COLOMBO

November 16, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN, FRIENDS AND FELLOW-LABOURERS,

I thank you for presenting me with your beautiful address and handsome purse for the cause which has brought me to this pearl amongst the islands of the earth. I have called myself a labourer in addressing you as fellow-labourers and I have done so for the simple reason that since 1904 I have been endeavouring to live to the best of my ability as a labourer myself. But long before that date I began to understand and appreciate the dignity of labour and it was long before that date that I realized at the same time that labour was not receiving its due. And out of His infinite grace, God so fashioned my life that I began to be drawn closer and closer to labour and to its service. It, therefore, gives me great joy to be in your midst and to receive from fellow labourers an address and also a purse on behalf of those who are, materially speaking, infinitely worse off than yourselves. The use made by you in your address of the expression "Mother India" has touched me to my deepest recesses. The use of that expression derives great significance to me because I know all of you are not Indians. Perhaps to those of you—and you are in a majority in this Union or these Unions, so far as I understand—and, as I said, to all those of you who are not Indians, the significance that I attach to that expression and which I shall presently explain to you was not before your mind's eye when you made use of the expression. Legend—and legend at times is superior to history —legend has it that in remote times a king called Rama came to Lanka to rid this island of an evil king, and instead of exercising the rights of conquest by annexing this

fair island to India, he restored it to Vibhishana, the brother of that evil king, and crowned him King of Lanka.

Rendered in modern language, it means that Rama, before trying the loyalty of the people of Lanka or the loyalty of King Vibhishana and putting either him or the people through a course of tutelage, gave them straightway complete self-government or dominion status. Many changes have taken place since that date, assigned to the period of this legend, in this place as also in India, and they have undergone many vicissitudes of fortune, but the fact remains that the millions in India, even to the present day, believe in this legend more firmly than in any facts of history. And if you, people of this beautiful island, are not ashamed of owning some connection with your next-door neighbour I would advise you and ask you to share the pride that millions of Indians have in owning this legend. And now you can understand why I told you that you, in my opinion a daughter State, in using the expression "Mother India" for India, had done well in expressing your allegiance to that country.

I would also point out that whether Rama of the legend ever lived on this earth or not, and whether also the ten-headed Ravana of the legend lived in Lanka or not, it is true that there is a Rama who is living today and there is also a Ravana who is living today. Rama is the sweet and sacred name in Hinduism for God and Ravana is the name given in Hindu mythology to evil, whenever evil becomes embodied in the human frame. And it is the business, the function, of the God Rama to destroy evil wherever it occurs and it is equally the function of the God Rama to give to his devotees like Vibhishana a free charter of irrevocable self-government.

Let us all, whether we are labourers or otherwise, seek by ridding ourselves by the help of God Rama within us, of the ten-headed monster of evil within us, and ask for the charter of self-government. And you fellow-labourers who have still to receive your due are perhaps in greater need of Rama's help and Rama's grace in order that you might rid yourselves of evil and fit yourselves for self-government. Don't believe it if anyone tells you that it was I who secured the comparative freedom for the indentured labourers of South Africa or that it was I who secured freedom to the labourers of Ahmedabad or Malabar. They secured whatever they did because they complied with the rules, the inexorable rules, governing a self-government. They won because they helped themselves. And let me briefly tell you what in my opinion you should do to come to your own. Combination amongst

yourselves in the form of unions is undoubtedly the first step. But I can tell you from experience that your very Union can become one of the causes of your bondage if you do not comply with other conditions which I shall presently mention to you. You should consider every one of you a trustee for the welfare of the rest of your fellow-labourers and not be self-seeking. You must live and remain non-violent under circumstances however grave and provoking. If you will be men and realize your dignity as such, you must give up drink in its entirety if you are given to that cursed habit. A man under the influence of drink becomes worse than a beast and forgets the distinction between his sister, his mother and his wife. And if you really believe me as your friend you will take the advice of this old friend of yours and shun drink as you would shun a snake hissing in front of you. A snake can only destroy the body but the curse of drink corrupts the soul within. This, therefore, is much more to be feared and avoided than a snake. You should also avoid gambling if you are given to that evil habit.

There is a still more delicate thing about which I was pained to receive a letter only yesterday or today from a friend who has given his signature. He tells me that the personal purity amongst labourers is somewhat conspicuous by its absence. He tells me that many of you, men and women, huddle yourselves together in small spaces irrespective of any restriction that modesty imposes upon us and demands from us. One of the things that sharply distinguishes a man from a beast is that man from his earliest age has recognized the sanctity of the marriage bond and regulated his life in connection with woman by way of self-restraint which he has more and more imposed upon himself.

My dear friends, if you will realize your dignity as men and rise to your full height, as you ought to, you will bear this little thing in mind that I have told you, treasure it and give effect to it from this very night. If your means do not permit you to have separate and sufficient habitations so as to observe the laws of primary decency, you will refuse to serve under such degrading conditions and for such insufficient wages. I would honour you as brave men if you will accept a state of utter starvation rather than that you should labour on such insufficient wages as would render it impossible for you to observe the primary laws of morality. I do not care whether you are Hindus, or whether you call yourselves Buddhists, or whether you are Christian or Mussalman, the demand of religion is the same and inexorable

that every woman other than your wife must be treated by you as your sister or your mother, whose body must be held as sacred as your own. I would advise you to use your Union as much for internal reformation as for defence against the assaults from without, and remember that while it is quite proper to insist upon your rights and privileges it is imperative that you should recognize the obligation that every right carries with it.

While therefore you will insist upon adequate wage, proper humane treatment from your employers and proper and good sanitary lodgings, you will also recognize that you should treat the business of your employers as if it was your own business and give to it honest and undivided attention. You must on no account neglect your children but you should give them decent education and bring them up properly so that they may be able, when they grow up, to play their parts on the human stage nobly and well.

Lastly, while you have done well in thinking of the unfortunate millions in India I would advise you to establish a living bond between them and yourselves, especially if you still consider that India is the Mother State, the Mother Country; you will for the sake of the few millions invest every pie or every cent that you may want to use for dress in khadi and nothing else. I thank you once more for your address and your purse and for the patient attention with which you have listened to the few words I have said to you this evening. I also thank your volunteers who have been silently and unselfishly serving me to the best of their ability and showing me very delicate attention; although I did not acknowledge their service before, the matter did not escape my attention. I hope and pray that the words I have spoken to you this evening will enter your hearts and God will give you the wisdom and the strength to carry out such advice as may commend itself to you.

The Ceylon Daily News, 17-11-1927

180. A COTTON QUOTATION

Mr. Richard Gregg, with whose name the reader of *Young India* is familiar as the joint author of the booklet on *Takli Spinning*, sends the following useful old quotation[1] which he has unearthed in the course of his researches.

Young India, 17-11-1927

181. VARNASHRAMA AND ITS DISTORTION

The reader will find in another column Sjt. Nadkarni's interesting letter[2] on the Brahmin-Non-Brahmin question. I gladly respond to his invitation to explain my views on *varnashrama* more fully than I have done in my speeches during the recent Tamil Nad tour, which have been more or less fully reproduced in these columns.

Let me clear the issue by dismissing from consideration the celebrated story of a Sudra said to have had his head cut off by Rama by reason of his having dared to become a sannyasi. I do not read Shastras literally, certainly not as history. The story of the decapitation of Shambuka is not in keeping with the general character of Rama. And whatever may be said in the various *Ramayanas*, I hold my Rama to be incapable of having decapitated a Sudra or for that matter anyone else. The story of Shambuka, if it proves anything, proves that in the days when the story arose it was held to be a capital crime for Sudras to perform certain rites. We are in the dark as to the meaning of the word Sudra here. I have heard even an allegorical meaning given to the whole version. But that would not alter the fact of certain unreasonable prohibitions operating against the Sudras at some stage in the evolution of Hinduism. Only I do not need to join Sjt. Nadkarni in doing penance for the alleged decapitation of Shambuka, for I do not believe in a historical person by that name

[1] Not reproduced here. The quotation was from the English translation of Fra Paolino da San Bartolomeo's *A Voyage to the East Indies*, published in Rome in 1796. Among other things, it said: "It may in truth be asserted, that in spinning, weaving and dyeing the Indians excel all other nations in the world."

[2] For extracts from the letter, *vide* Appendix VI.

having been decapitated by a historical person called Rama. For the general persecution of the so-called lower orders of Hinduism, especially the so-called untouchables, I am, as a Hindu, doing penance every moment of my life. In my opinion, illustrations like that of Shambuka have no place in a religious consideration of the question of *varnashrama*. I propose therefore merely to say what I believe to be *varnashrama*, and I should not hesitate to reject the institution if it was proved to me that the interpretation put upon it by me has no warrant in Hinduism. *Varna* and *ashrama* are, as Sjt. Nadkarni says, two different words. The institution of four *ashramas* enables one the better to fulfil the purpose of life for which the law of *varna* is a necessity. The law of *varna* prescribes that a person should, for his living, follow the lawful occupation of his forefathers. I hold this to be a universal law governing the human family. Its breach entails, as it has entailed, serious consequence for us. But the vast majority of men unwittingly follow the hereditary occupation of their fathers. Hinduism rendered a great service to mankind by the discovery of and conscious obedience to this law. If man's, as distinguished from lower animal's, function is to know God, it follows that he must not devote the chief part of his life to making experiments in finding out what occupation will best suit him for earning his livelihood. On the contrary, he will recognize that it is best for him to follow his father's occupation, and devote his spare time and talent to qualifying himself for the task to which mankind is called.

Here then the difficulty suggested by my correspondent does not arise. For no one is precluded from rendering multitudinous acts of voluntary service and qualifying oneself for it. Thus Sjt. Nadkarni born of Brahmin parents and I born of Vaisya parents may consistently with the law of *varna* certainly serve as honorary national volunteers or as honorary nurses or honorary scavengers in times of need, though in obedience to that law he as a Brahmin would depend for his bread on the charity of his neighbours and I as a Vaisya would be earning my bread by selling drugs or groceries. Everyone is free to render any useful service so long as he does not claim reward for it.

In this conception of the law of *varna* no one is superior to any other. All occupations are equal and honourable in so far as they are not in conflict with morals, private or public. A scavenger has the same status as a Brahmin. Was it not Max Muller who said that it was in Hinduism more than in any other religion that life was no more and no less than Duty?

There is no doubt that at some stage of its evolution Hinduism suffered corruption, and the canker of superiority and inferiority entered and vitiated it. But this notion of inequality seems to me to be wholly against the spirit of sacrifice which dominates everything in Hinduism. There is no room for arrogation of superiority by one class over another in a scheme of life based on ahimsa whose active form is undefiled love for all life.

Let it not be said against this law of *varna* that it makes life dull and robs it of all ambition. In my opinion that law of *varna* alone makes life livable by all and restores the only object worthy of it, namely, self-realization. Today we seem to think of and strive for material pursuits which are in their very nature transitory, and we do this almost to the exclusion of the one thing needful.

If I am told that the interpretation put by me upon *varna* is not supported by anything to be found in the *smritis* which are codified Hindu conduct, my answer is that the codes of conduct based upon fundamental invariable maxims of life vary from time to time as we gain fresh experience and make fresh observations. It is possible to show many rules of the *smritis* which we no longer recognize as binding or even worthy of observance. Invariable maxims are few and common to all religions. The latter vary in their application. And no religion has exhausted the varieties of all possible applications. They must expand with the expansion of ideas and knowledge of new facts. Indeed I believe that the contents of words grow with the growth of human experience. The connotation of the words sacrifice, truth, non-violence, *varnashrama* etc., is infinitely richer today than it was during the known historic past. Applying this principle to the word *varna*, we need not be bound, it would be foolish and wrong to be bound, by the current interpretation, assuming that it is inconsistent with the requirements of the age with our notions of morals. To do otherwise will be suicide.

Varna considered in the manner above indicated has nothing in common with caste as we know it today, nor is prohibition as to interdining and intermarriage an essential part of the recognition of the law of *varna*. That these prohibitions were introduced for the conservation of *varnas* is possible. Restrictions against promiscuous marriage are necessary in any scheme of life based on self-restraint. Restraints on promiscuous dining arise either from sanitary considerations or differences in habits. But disregard of these restrictions formerly carried, or what is more, should now carry no social or legal punishment or forfeiture of one's *varna*.

Varnas were originally four. It was an intelligent and intelligible division. But the number is no part of the law of *varna*. A tailor for instance may not become a blacksmith although both may be and should be classed as Vaisyas.

The most forcible objection I heard raised in Tamil Nad was that, however good and innocuous *varnas* might appear under my interpretation, they must either be worked under a different name or destroyed altogether by reason of the evil odour that surrounds them. The objectors feared that my interpretation would be ignored and yet my authority would be freely quoted for supporting under cover of *varna* the hideous inequalities and tyrannies practised at the present day in Hinduism. They further observed that in the popular estimation caste and *varna* were mere synonymous terms and that the restraint of *varna* was nowhere practised, but the tyranny of caste was rampant everywhere. All these objections have no doubt much force in them. But they are objections such as can be advanced against many corrupted institutions that once were good. A reformer's business is to examine the institution itself and to set about reforming it if its abuses can be separated from it. *Varna* is however not a mere institution made by man but it is a law discovered by him. It cannot therefore be set aside; its hidden meaning and potentialities should be explored and utilized for the good of society. We have seen that the evil is not in the law or the institution itself, but it lies in the doctrine of superiority and inferiority which are superadded to it.

The question too arises how the law is to be worked in these days when all the four *varnas* or sub-*varnas* break asunder all the restrictions, seeking by all means lawful and otherwise to advance their material welfare, and when some arrogate superiority over others who in their turn are rightly challenging the claim. The law will work itself out even if we ignore it. But that will be the way of punishment. If we will escape destruction, we will submit to it. And seeing that we are just now engaged in applying to ourselves the sub-human rule of survival of the fittest, meaning the strongest (physically), it would be well to recognize ourselves as one *varna*, viz., Sudras, even though some may be teaching and some may be soldiering and some others may be engaged in commercial pursuits. I remember in 1915 the Chairman at the Social Conference in Nellore suggesting that formerly all were Brahmins, and that now too all should be recognized as such and that the other *varnas* should be abolished. It appeared to be then, as it appears to me now, as a weird suggestion. It is

the so-called superior that has to descend from his heights, if the reform is to be peaceful. Those who for ages have been *trained* to consider themselves as the lowest in the social scale cannot suddenly have the equipment of the so-called higher classes. They can therefore rise to *power* only by bloodshed, in other words by destroying society itself. In the scheme of reconstruction I have in view, no mention has been made of the untouchables, for I find no place for untouchability in the law of *varna* or otherwise in Hinduism. They in common with the rest will be absorbed in the Sudras. Out of these the other three *varnas* will gradually emerge purified and equal in status though differing in occupations. The Brahmins will be very few. Fewer still will be the soldier class who will not be the hirelings or the unrestrained rulers of today, but real protectors and trustees of the nation laying down their lives for its service. The fewest will be the Sudras for in a well-ordered society a minimum amount of labour will be taken from fellowmen. The most numerous will be the Vaisyas —a *varna* that would include all professions—the agriculturists, the traders, the artisans, etc. This scheme may sound Utopian. I however prefer to live in this Utopia of my imagination to trying to live up to the unbridled licence of a society that I see tottering to its disruption. It is surely given to individuals to live their own Utopias even though they may not be able to see them accepted by society. Every reform has made its beginning with the individual, and that which had inherent vitality and the backing of a stout soul was accepted by the society in whose midst the reformer lived.

Young India, 17-11-1927

182. READY-MADE KHADI CLOTHES

A Parsi friend makes some suggestions about ready-made khadi clothes which I expand as follows:

> Just as we have ready-made khadi caps on the market, why not khadi vests and shirts both after the Indian and European styles? Surely our khadi shopkeepers should be resourceful enough to find the different varieties of clothes that are sold ready-made and to have them made of khadi.

The suggestion is worthy of consideration by khadi shops. It will be one method of cheapening khadi and providing remunerative employment for the town-dweller. If the khadi tailor has patriotism enough to take a trifle less than the market wage,

the saving can go to reduce the price of khadi required for the articles. Miss Mithubehn Petit has found out ingenious patterns which she works on khadi and charges prices which her chosen customers gladly pay for the knowledge that they are not only supporting khadi but also girls who might otherwise have been without such a clean method of earning livelihood as khadi work provides for them. In Bihar and Tamil Nad, I saw tailors who were working exclusively on khadi. There is no reason why even educated Indians should not go in for tailoring with a view to serving khadi at the same time that they may be serving themselves.

Young India, 17-11-1927

183. SPEECH AT NEGOMBO

November 17, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am deeply grateful to you for presenting me with this very beautiful and artistic address. Ever since my arrival in your beautiful island I have been surrounded with affectionate attention in all quarters and you have but added to the same by bringing me to this picturesque place and presenting this address. I hope that my countrymen who are living in your midst are living with you in peace and harmony. And I suggest to you who are from India that you will consider yourselves representatives of India's culture and tradition and live up to them. I would ask you, inhabitants of this island, to bear with them as your next-door neighbour, whenever you see shortcomings in them.

At the end of my talk I shall consider myself a happy and fortunate man if, as you have co-operated and made my mission happy, so also you have lived in mutual co-operation. It does not surprise me in the least that you, the hospitable people of Ceylon, recognize the usefulness and necessity of my humble mission. Indeed I would have been greatly surprised if you had not risen to the occasion and endeavoured to do your duty by responding to the dire call of millions and millions of the people who, everybody will admit, are living in a state of semi-starvation. I thank you once more for your address.

The Ceylon Daily News, 18-11-1927

184. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KURUNEGALA

November 17, 1927

. . . Mr. Tambiraja had referred to the political situation of Ceylon, and his expectations from the Reform Commission. If he [Gandhiji] expressed an opinion on the matter, he would be abusing the hospitality he had received. He, however, expressed a wish that the expectations of the country would be fulfilled, and hoped that when the deliberations of the Royal Commission were over, their finding would be to the entire satisfaction of the people.

There was another question, he said, about which he could freely express himself. That was with regard to temperance. During the short time he had, he had made an attempt to gather some idea about the statistics and it was with great pain he discovered that Ceylon was no better off than her neighbours across the sea. In his opinion one who was a slave to drink was no better than a beast. He wished the Temperance Union in Ceylon every success, and he hoped that they would not be contented until Ceylon was entirely "dry". There was one other thing he wished to touch upon. He had been informed that women belonging to certain castes in the island were not permitted to wear upper garments by those of higher castes. He hoped that the ladies who were present would consider it a personal insult if any woman is prohibited from wearing whatever garment she desired. In conclusion, he hoped that the people of this country would help their famishing neighbours in India by buying cloth turned out in India.

The Ceylon Daily News, 18-11-1927

185. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MATALE

November 18, 1927

I thank you for these addresses as also for the generous purses that you have presented to me.

You have in your addresses very kindly mentioned my wife also. But I am very sorry to have to inform you that she is not with me this morning. The fact is that we are not travelling in Ceylon to receive honours from you, but purely for the business which I have undertaken on behalf of the poor millions of India. As a matter of fact, people have often, as a gentleman did last night, mistaken her for my mother. For me, as for her also, I hope, it is not only a pardonable mistake, but a welcome mistake. For years past, she has ceased to be my wife by mutual

consent. Nearly forty years ago I became an orphan, and for nearly thirty years she has been my mother, friend, nurse, cook, bottle-washer and all these things. If in the early hours of the day she had come with me to divide the honours, I should have gone without my food. And nobody would have looked after my clothing and creature comforts. So we have come to a reasonable understanding that I should have all the honours and she should have all the drudgery. I assure you that some of the co-workers will duly inform her of all the kind things that you have said about her and I hope that the explanation that I have tendered you will be accepted by you as sufficient excuse for her absence.

You will forgive me for having taken up so much of your time over a flimsy personal explanation, but if the men in front of me, and especially the women, will understand the serious side of the explanation and appreciate the secret of it I have no doubt that you will all be the happier for it.

I have no doubt that it is not necessary for me to draw the attention of a people whose country is dominated by the spirit of the Buddha to the fact that life is not a bundle of enjoyments and privileges, but a bundle of duties and services.

That which separates man from the beast is essentially man's recognition of the necessity of putting a series of restraints on worldly enjoyment.

I am therefore surprised to find that in this land of Buddha people are given, as they are given in other parts of the country, to drink.

In studying the statistics of this island, I found that the drink revenue was a substantial part of the general revenue. I was still more shocked to discover that, unlike us in India, the drink habit did not carry with it a sense of shame and disrespectability.

You know that I belong to the country where Gautama was born, where he found his Enlightenment, and where he passed his life. Whatever the Ceylonese scholars in Buddhism may say to the contrary, I want you to take it from me that this drink habit is totally against the spirit of the Buddha. Because in this land, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam are represented in abundance, I tell you that in Hinduism drink is a sin; I know that it is equally held abominable in Islam. I am sorry to confess that in Christian Europe drink is not considered disrespectable, but I am glad to be able to tell you that hundreds, if not thousands, whose friendship I have the privilege to enjoy, have assured me that this drink habit in Europe is entirely contrary to the spirit of Christ.

I am in close touch with Christian America. You know how bravely these men in America are battling against the drink evil. I would therefore respectfully urge you all, whether you are Buddhists or Hindus, Christians or Mussalmans, to unite together in making a supreme effort to rid this country of this drink curse.

Whatever may be said about the medical necessity of drink in cold climates, everyone is agreed that there is absolutely no occasion for drink in the climate of a temperate zone like this.

One of the things to which I would like to draw your attention is the existence of untouchability in the most liberal religion in the world—Buddhism. I wish you would take immediate steps to declare every man to be absolutely equal with the rest of you. You are denying Buddhism, you are denying humanity, so long as you regard a single man as an untouchable.

Lastly, since you have been good enough to sympathize with my mission, I would ask you to broaden your sympathy by making your purchase of cloth in khadi alone, so long as your clothes are not manufactured in this beautiful island.

My barber friends have presented me with an address and a purse. It is a manifestation from fellow-workers of sympathy for the starving millions, which deeply touches me. I would be happier if those, who have, will always think of those, who have not.

I thank you once more for the addresses and the purses.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 70-2

186. SPEECH AT DHARMARAJ COLLEGE, KANDY

November 18, 1927

It has been my good fortune to feel at home and make myself at home wherever I have gone in any part of the world, and had I not been able to do so, probably I should have died long ago without having had to commit suicide. But I feel doubly at home when I see my Parsi friends. You cannot understand this really. And you might also think that I am joking. It is not joking. It is serious, because of my having been in closest association with Parsis in South Africa and in India, and having had personally nothing but treasures of love from them. Even now you do not know, of course, but it gives me great pleasure to own before you that some of my best workers are Parsis, and they are those three grand-daughters of the Grand Old Man of India.

But I must not detain you on my personal and family affairs. I thank you very much for this purse and I like this opportunity of having come to you.

As I told the boys of the Trinity College a little while ago, your education is absolutely worthless if it is not built on a solid foundation of truth and purity. If you, boys, are not careful about the personal purity of your lives and if you are not careful about being pure in thought, speech, and deed, then I tell you that you are lost, although you may become perfect finished scholars.

I have been asked to draw your attention to one thing. Purity consists first of all in possessing a pure heart, but what there is in the heart really comes out also and is shown in outward acts and outward behaviour. And a boy who wants to keep his mouth pure will never utter a bad word. Of course, that is quite clear. But he neither will put anything into his mouth that will cloud his intellect, cloud his mind and damage his friends also.

I know that there are boys who smoke, and in Ceylon perhaps you are as bad as they are in Burma, though boys are becoming bad everywhere so far as this wretched habit of smoking is concerned. And of course, Parsis as you know, are called or rather miscalled, fire-worshippers. They are no more fire-worshippers than you and though they see God through that great manifestation the Sun which is nothing but the God of Fire.

Some of you good Parsis never smoke, and you make it a point, whenever you have a number of boys in your care, to train the boys not to foul their mouths by smoke.

If any of you are smoking, you will henceforth give up that bad habit. Smoking fouls one's breath. It is a disgusting habit. When he is in a railway carriage, the smoker never cares whether there are ladies or men sitting about him who never smoke, and that the stench that comes out from his mouth may be disgusting to them.

The cigarette might be a small thing from a distance, but when the cigarette smoke goes into one's mouth and then comes out, it is poison. Smokers do not care where they spit.

Here Gandhiji related a story from Tolstoy to explain how the tobacco habit was more disastrous in its effects than drink and proceeded:

Smoking clouds one's intellect, and it is a bad habit. If you ask doctors, and they happen to be good doctors, they will tell you that smoke has been the cause of cancer in many cases, or at least that smoke is at the bottom of it.

Why smoke, when there is no necessity for it? It is no food. There is no enjoyment in it except in the first instance through suggestion from outside.

You, boys, if you are good boys, if you are obedient to your teachers and parents, omit smoking and whatever you save out of this, please send on to me for the famishing millions of India.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 75-7

187. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, KANDY

November 18, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am sorry that I have lost the voice that I had only some months ago. My voice is now one that will not carry very far, and if those who are sitting at the end of the hall cannot hear me, I hope they will forgive me for my physical inability. I do not know whether it is necessary to apologize to you also for my physical inability to stand up and speak to you. I thank you very sincerely for the address that you have given me and the mention made therein to some services that I have rendered to my country and mankind in general. I have been reading today something of this ancient city and the struggles that the citizens have been undergoing, and a feeling of pain and sorrow has crept upon me. I have not yet finished this booklet, but I have read enough of it to realize the difficulties the citizens of this place are undergoing. I can only say to them through this audience that my whole heart goes out to them. I hope that all your best wishes will be realized.

As I said in Colombo, I am a lover of municipal life. I do believe that municipal service is a privilege and duty which every citizen should render to the best of his or her ability. That service can be rendered without becoming a member of the municipality. It is not given to everyone to be elected members. I do not suppose that you, in Ceylon, are different from the people in India and therefore I fear that here, as in India, places in the municipalities are often aspired to and if that is so, the sooner we get rid of this idea the better for us.

I do not know whether you have any slums here. I fear you are not without slums, but those who are municipal councillors owe their duty to the poor citizens more than to the rich ones. I have had municipal experience in Bombay, Calcutta and Allahabad and almost all the principal cities in India and I have noticed

that those who are powerful and wealthy are able to have municipal service properly and promptly rendered to them, but, on the contrary, the poorest people hardly receive any consideration. I will be wrong if I let you understand that that is the condition in all Indian cities. No councillors have made it their duty to serve the poorest. I must also say that this state of things is improving though the improvement is painfully slow.

I venture to suggest to you that, in Ceylon, you are happier, much happier, than we are in India, in that you have not large masses of mankind to deal with. You have got a country second to none in physical beauty or climate. There is absolutely no reason why you should have plague, or the fear of plague. You should be able, as some of the municipalities in South Africa—I know South Africa even more than my own country—to keep off such visitations. I notice that the municipalities make it their business, like the Cape municipalities, to advertise their places and to draw people from all parts of the earth. They advertise their cities by making them gems of beauty and you here surpass even Cape Town in beauty.

The natural scenery that I see about me, in Ceylon, is probably unsurpassed on the face of the earth. If you will add to it by making all efforts humanly possible, you can certainly advertise this beautiful spot and draw people from all parts of the earth much to their betterment and your own.

They have much to learn in this island which received enlightenment from the Great Buddha. You have a great religion which cannot be surpassed on the face of the earth. It is a religion which ennobles the noblest. It is professed by the largest number on the face of the earth but your religion, as it stands at present, is not at its best because you do not put forward an effort. It is your duty to do so.

You cannot begin better than by making up this beautiful place into a little paradise. I thank you again for your address of welcome.

The Ceylon Daily News, 19-11-1927; also *With Gandhiji in Ceylon*

188. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KANDY

November 18, 1927

I am obliged to you for these numerous illuminated addresses, costly caskets and many purses.

I had hoped to be able to speak to you at some length, but your kind presentations of the gifts and the reading of those addresses have taken up over forty minutes out of sixty allotted for this meeting.

It has given me the greatest pleasure to be able to visit this beautiful island of yours. I have come to understand some of the difficulties and sorrows of the people of Kandy during the few hours that I have been in your midst. I wish that it were possible for me to give you more than lip sympathy, but as it is, I have to be satisfied with assuring you of my hearty sympathy and with praying that your sorrows may somehow be alleviated.

You have, in one of your addresses, asked me to do something in order that you may have the Buddha Gaya restored to you. I can give you my assurance that I shall not fail to do everything that is in my power to restore the property to you (Cheers.). But I wish I could think that your applause was justified, because I fear that in spite of all my efforts my power to help you is much less than you seem to imagine.

I would therefore warn you against building much hope on my assurance and ask you to continue your effort to vindicate your right absolutely unabated.

I had hoped to be able to speak to you on the message on the spinning-wheel as it is applicable to you, but I feel that it is my duty to occupy the few minutes at my disposal with more serious and more urgent problems before you.

I have heard and it has given me pain to learn that even with you, the followers of the Enlightened One, there is untouchability rigidly observed. I assure you that it is wholly against the spirit of the Buddha. And I would urge Buddhists and Hindus to rid the community of this curse.

There is again the drink curse prevalent in your midst, as it is in other parts of the world. In so far as I know it, it is opposed to the spirit of all the great religions of the world and most decidedly Buddhism.

I understand that you have the right of local option in your midst. It would give me the greatest satisfaction to learn when

I have left your shores that you are making the fullest use of this right of local option in order to rid this beautiful island of this curse.

I was distressed to learn that the estates and the plantations were not covered by the right of local option. I hope that the information given to me is not true. But whether that information is true or false, I hope that my voice will somehow or other reach the great planters who ought to regard themselves as the trustees for the welfare of the labourers on whom depends their marvellous prosperity. I venture respectfully to suggest to them that it is their duty to take a personal interest in the social welfare of the labourers whose bodies and even their souls are entrusted to their care. I regard it as their duty not only to put no temptation in the way of their labourers in the shape of drink, but to make an active effort to wean them from their errors.

I see that the time allotted for this meeting is over and I must conclude by repeating my thanks to the people of Kandy for the extraordinary kindness that they have shown to me.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 77-8

189. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BADULLA

November 19, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for your address and purse. It has given me the greatest pleasure to be in your beautiful island.

I see before me thousands of labourers from the neighbouring plantations. I wish that I had time to go in your midst and look at the surroundings in which you are living and your habitations and mode of life.

You may not all know that nearly a generation of my life has been passed either in the midst of labourers or in closest contact with them and nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to have passed a few days in your midst, understanding your wants and aspirations, but I hope that the cause which prevents me from doing so will be accepted as sufficient excuse for my not coming in your midst and living with you for a time.

The cause is that I am travelling just now as a self-appointed representative of millions in India who are infinitely worse off than any of you here. It is for their sake that these purses, that you have seen presented to me, have been given.

Every rupee of this purse will go to find employment in their own huts for 16 women at least per day. These are men and women who cannot afford, even if they semi-starve, to leave their own homes, huts and fields. Out of the moneys that are being collected throughout the year nearly every year 50,000 women are being supported in their own homes through the spinning-wheel industry.

Behind these spinners, several thousand weavers, dyers, printers, washermen and others are also being supported, who, but for this revival of spinning, would have been without any work.

This work is being done through the agency of an all-India organization called the All-India Spinners' Association which contains several self-sacrificing men, either sons of millionaires or of proved merit and integrity.

Whilst for this cause I gladly collect sums from moneyed men, it gives me great joy to be able to collect also from poor men like those of you who are sitting in front of me. Every cent, every anna received from a willing heart is just as welcome as the rupee or ten-rupee note received from a rich man.

I know that many of you who have graced this occasion with your presence have not had the opportunity given to you to subscribe to this fund. If my guess is correct, and many of you have not subscribed, I invite you, before you leave this meeting, to give your mite to this cause if you are so minded.

I am glad to be able to inform you that whilst I am making this appeal to the audience, a member has already sent me evidently all the money that he had in his pocket, Rs. 8 and odd.

But a more serious thing to which I wish to refer is that you should all establish a living bond with these starving millions by wearing khadi which is produced by them out of these funds. All these moneys will be perfectly useless if I do not find customers for the khadi that I manufacture. I see that the response has already commenced before my appeal, and if every one of you put your hands into your pockets, and give your eyes to the men who are collecting and ears to me, I shall easily deliver the message I am about to give you.

There is an important matter which I want to discuss with you. A Western friend informed me this morning that hundreds of looms used to work here and he told me sorrowfully that owing to importation of foreign cloth and foreign yarn, all these looms were lying idle and this old industry had all but died out in this district.

I have told this gentleman that if he wants the assistance of experts in order to teach all the processes from ginning to hand-

spinning, he can have it in Ceylon itself. There is near Colombo a family which has already learned all the processes and manufactures its own cloth from raw cotton.

There is no doubt whatsoever that if there are really needy men and women in this fair island, nothing can be better than that you should clothe yourselves out of cloth of your own spinning and weaving. I therefore hope that you will help this Rev. gentleman with all your hearts in his work and progress, and make use of all the industry and skill that he may place at your disposal.

I understood from another visitor this afternoon that you are without any organization here for doing this class of social work or political work of any nature whatsoever, and indeed nothing would please me better than to find that as one of the results of this meeting, you had such a working organization manned by selfless workers.

Still another friend came to me and asked me what was the message of the spinning-wheel for the people of Ceylon. He told me that there were men and women in this island who also needed work, and in answer to my cross-questions, he told me also that he wanted me to show a way whereby the youth of this fair land could be weaned from hasty and indiscriminate imitation of the West.

A fourth friend writes to me, saying that all the beautiful garments that I see on some of the women of Ceylon and all the faultless European style dress that I see on so many young men must not be taken by me to be an indication of the possession of wealth by the wearers. This correspondent tells me that many of these stylishly dressed men often find themselves in the hands, I am sorry to say, of Chettis or Pathan money-lenders.

Well, the spinning-wheel has a message for all this class of people. To the starving man or woman who has no work possibly for him or her to do, the spinning-wheel says: 'Spin me and you will at least find a crust of bread for yourself.'

That is its economic message, but it has also a cultural message for one and all. The spinning-wheel says culturally to you and to me: 'Seeing that there are millions on the face of this earth who are compulsorily idle for want of work, and since I am the only instrument that can be placed in their hands without taking work away from a single mouth, will you not spin me for the sake of these millions and produce an atmosphere of honest industry, honest work and self-reliance and hope for all on God's earth?'

That is the cultural message the spinning-wheel addresses to all people of the earth, no matter to what country, religion or race they belong.

I assure you that slowly but surely this cultural appeal of the spinning-wheel is finding a lodgment in the remotest corners of the earth. I know Englishmen, Austrians, Germans, Poles, who have already accepted this appeal of the spinning-wheel. And I assure well-to-do men and women of Ceylon that if they will accept the cultural message of the spinning-wheel and try to make at least some part of their own clothing they will find themselves, at the end of the task, much taller than they are today.

The spinning-wheel has a third message which is metaphorical. It stands for simple life and high thinking. It is a standing protest against the modern mad rush for adding material comfort upon comfort and making life so complicated as to make one totally unfit for knowing one's self or one's God. It says appealingly every minute of our life to you and to me: 'Use me and you will find that if all of you unitedly make use of me, small and insignificant though I may appear, I shall be an irresistible force against the mad, indiscriminate worship of the curse called machinery.'

It is a standing rebuke to the men and women of Ceylon who go in for all kinds of fashions and styles and it tells them: '*Do not for the sake of your country ape the manners and customs of others which can only do harm to you and for heaven's sake do not wish to be what every one of the people of Ceylon cannot be.*'

I must now place before you one or two other subjects which I wish to dwell upon, and I want to tell you about the drink evil.

I know that many of you, labourers, are given to the drink habit. The drink habit is worse than a snake-bite. A snake-bite may poison a body to death, but the drink habit poisons and corrupts the soul. I would therefore urge you to fly from that curse as you would fly from a hissing snake.

I would respectfully urge the employers of labour in this district to regard themselves as trustees for the welfare of their employees and try to wean them from the drink habit. It is their bounden duty, in my humble opinion, to close every canteen in their neighbourhood and take away every such temptation from their men. I can tell them from personal experience that if they will open for their men decent refreshment rooms and provide them with all kinds of innocent games, they will find that the men will no longer require this intoxicating liquid.

As I was passing today from Kandy to this place, I passed through some of the finest bits of scenery that I have ever

witnessed in my life. Where nature has been so beneficent and where nature provides for you eternal and innocent intoxication in the grand scenery about you, surely it is criminal for men or women to seek intoxication from that sparkling but deadly liquor. I suggest to the followers of the Enlightened One that it is totally against the spirit of his teaching to consider that drink can possibly be taken by those who adore the Buddha.

I was deeply pained to hear that even many of you who are Buddhists observe the curse of untouchability. I understood from a very high officer that some of you Buddhists consider it an insult for an untouchable woman to wear upper garments. I have no hesitation in saying without fear of contradiction that if you believe in untouchability, you deny totally the teaching of the Buddha. He who regarded the lowest animal life as dear as his own would never tolerate this cursed distinction between man and man and regard a single human being as an untouchable.

I was equally sorry to hear that you, Hindus, had not left this curse in India itself, but had taken it with you even on entering Ceylon. I so wish that both the Buddhists and Hindus living in Ceylon would set about working and remove this curse from their midst.

I must devote a sentence or two to one very important thing which I had almost forgotten.

While I was in Colombo I received a letter which told me that the life of the men and women in the estates and in all huge workshops was not as pure as it ought to be. The letter went on to say that the relations between men and women were not what they should be.

What chiefly distinguishes man from the beast is that man from his age of discretion begins to practise a life of continual self-restraint. God has enabled man to distinguish between the sister, his mother, his daughter and his wife. Do not for one moment imagine that because you are labourers you are absolved from having to observe these necessary distinctions and restrictions. If your huts are not so constructed as to enable you to observe the laws of decency and necessary privacy, I would request your employers to provide you with facilities to enable you to do so.

May God help you to understand the significance of these last words of mine!

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 79-85

190. 'BHUNDI BHUNCHHI'

Gujaratis living outside Cutch may not even have an idea of what "Bhundi Bhunchhi" means. A tax known by this name seems to be collected in Cutch alone. It is imposed on those persons belonging to the Meghwal caste[1] who remarry. The State gives a monopoly for the collection of this tax. It is said that those who hold such monopoly rights perpetrate many kinds of atrocities in order to increase their earnings.

When I was in Cutch,[2] I discussed this and many similar matters with Maharao[3] and I had certainly hoped that this tax would immediately be abolished. However, a letter from a reader in Cutch shows that my hopes in this matter seem to have been belied.[4]

Besides these, I do not reproduce other extracts in which the writer has stated facts which one would be ashamed to publish. I would like to think that even the above facts are somewhat exaggerated. However, there should be no tax on persons remarrying and, that too on those of one particular caste. I did not come across a single officer in Cutch who defended this tax. Some of them gave unconvincing replies such as: "It has been in existence for a long time", "No one's attention has been drawn to it." We all then thought, however, that this tax would be surely repealed and the poor Meghwals would be relieved of this infliction.

This, however, did not materialize and the writer hopes for my help. I wish I had the capacity to convince Maharaoshri or his officers. If I had this capacity, I would immediately make use of it. There is a limit to the influence which newspapers can exercise. It is often found that the mahatmas can be influential only to the extent that they can be made use of. The satyagrahi's influence is also not unlimited. As a journalist I have no influence whatsoever in Cutch. As a mahatma my influence [in Cutch] is on the debit side and as a satyagrahi it will have to be tested when the time comes. Although the influence of a satyagrahi can be powerful, it is circumscribed by time, place and circumstances. At present my satyagraha would not benefit the Meghwals of Cutch. The circumstances are unfavourable, and,

[1] Traditionally regarded as untouchable

[2] Gandhiji was in Cutch from October 22, 1925 to November 3, 1925.

[3] The ruler of the then princely State of Cutch

[4] The letter has not been translated here.

moreover, Cutch is beyond my field of activity. Hence the only way open to me is that of the weak—that of the poor—the way of persuasion and appeal. Through this article I make that appeal to the Maharaoshri and his officers.

To the people of Cutch, however, innumerable ways are open provided they have courage and compassion. It is not necessary for them to revolt or to adopt any drastic measures. The Indian people have always adopted the remedial measure of getting into a sulk. Whenever the ruler was unjust, the people resorted to this measure and thereby convinced the ruler of his injustice. Today we have lost the capacity for this even. The Mahajans have become quite insignificant. I remember times when the Mahajan was even more powerful than the ruler. The Mahajan unions now exist only in name. They are now motivated by self-interest and have become unjust and, whereas once they were the representatives and true protectors of the people, at many places they are now found to have become the exploiters of the people. This explains why the rulers and their officers are found to be unafraid of the people, and why they have become indifferent and act in a wilful manner. To educate the people is the only remedy for this situation.

This education does not imply schooling. It envisages some reformers who enter the battlefield in the spirit of 'do or die', do not give up their courtesy, observe graceful restraint, maintain their seriousness and, by their own strength of character, overshadow both the ruler and the subjects and influence both of them. They can truly educate the people. It may, however, take a long time before the goal is achieved. But this alone is the straight and the shortest way.

So long as such reformers are not forthcoming, anyone who may think of a remedy which adheres to truth and non-violence should adopt it. The above mentioned writer has taken the step of approaching me. That is only a small step. If he wishes to do something better, he should familiarize himself with the Meghwals and make a detailed study of their hardships. Some of these hardships are such that close association with these people may remove them. Moreover, young people, rather than sit still, accepting defeat, should choose to go to places where immorality and injustice happen to be rampant. Anyone who with a pure heart and in a spirit of renunciation makes a serious effort, directly comes upon straightforward measures.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 20-11-1927

191. ABOUT THE CHARKHA SANGH

A Bihari gentleman living in Calcutta has put three questions to me in Hindi and asked me to give replies to them in *Navajivan*. As the questions are somewhat useful to Gujaratis also, I give them below in Gujarati.

The first question[1] denotes lack of faith in the Charkha Sangh[2] and ignorance of the common rights of donors.

Even some of my friends who know me well and are very familiar with the members of the Charkha Sangh believe that this organization will be wound up after my death and khadi will come to a standstill. A critic has gone to the length of prophesying that my corpse will be burnt with the fuel of spinning-wheels. In these circumstances, how can one blame this correspondent who, although he is a staunch supporter of khadi, has expressed these doubts? However, I would like to assure him and those like him that none will cremate my dead body with the wood of spinning-wheels. After my death, the members of the Charkha Sangh will work twice as hard as they are working now. I do not claim the sole monopoly of matchless faith in khadi. I do not find a single sign to suggest that khadi work will totally disappear from the country. I do, on the contrary, see certain signs of increasing faith in khadi. Moreover, the members of the Charkha Sangh Committee are devotees of khadi. They are independent-minded; some of them have sacrificed their all on the altar of khadi and they live for khadi alone. I cannot even imagine that such people will allow the Sangh to be wound up. Moreover, persons belonging to an organization should not lose faith in it, but should rather try always to develop the attitude which would enable them to remain loyal to it to the end and try to see that it continues to function although others may prove disloyal. I am absolutely sure that the Charkha Sangh has such loyal workers within its fold.

However, all created things will certainly perish. In accordance with this law perhaps the Charkha Sangh will one day

[1] "What will happen to the funds collected for the All-India Spinners' Association after the latter is wound up? Those persons who have made, are still making and/or will make contributions will have no claim whatsoever over the funds. Hence, will these contributors be consulted before a final decision is taken in regard to the use of these funds?"

[2] Akhil Bharatiya Charkha Sangh, i.e., All-India Spinners' Association

cease to function. Destruction as such is no evil. The destruction of an activity which is sacred is as good as a revolution. When we pull down a small temple and build a large one instead, we regard the former as having been renovated, and this is indeed true. In a similar manner, it is my firm belief that when the Charkha Sangh ceases to exist, its identity will be merged in a larger organization.

Anyone who contributes even a single pie to the Charkha Sangh will have a permanent right over it. This association can certainly not be wound up without the permission of the donors. In other words, their permission must be obtained if the funds belonging to the Charkha Sangh are to be used for any purpose other than khadi. Any donor may interfere if some member of the Sangh's Managing Committee wilfully misuses the funds or the name of the Charkha Sangh. An organization which is run with the help of donations is public property and not only the donors but the entire public have a right to see that it is properly run. It is because everyone is not aware of this simple fact, and even those who are aware of it are either lazy or self-centred, that dishonesty is practised in many institutions and funds are misappropriated. The public alone, however, is to blame for this. Wherever society is unenlightened, lazy, indifferent or selfish, hypocrites and rogues take advantage of the situation and do what they like.

Now to the second question.[1]

It is quite true that there is a difference in the prices of khadi in Bengal and Bihar. But this is not because of the profit pocketed by middlemen. There is some difference in the procedure that is followed in these two provinces, hence the cost of khadi production is higher in Bengal. The main reason, however, is that the spinner and the weaver in Bengal have to be paid higher wages. The Charkha Sangh does exercise control and supervision over the institutions in Bengal. The very nature of khadi activity is such that for the present khadi prices will differ from province to province. Perhaps, the khadi produced in Gujarat is priced even higher than that produced in Bengal. It is certainly more expensive than khadi produced in Bihar. This is not because

[1] "A pair of durable dhotis each measuring four yards (in length) is available for Rs. 3-8 in my province, Bihar, whereas such a pair is not available even for Rs. 4-4 in Abhoy Ashram or in the Khadi Pratishthan. Does this not confirm my suspicion that the organizers of these institutions earn some extra commission as the Akhil Bharatiya Charkha Sangh has no control over them? In Bihar, the entire activity (of khadi) is under the direct control of the Charkha Sangh."

some middleman makes any profit out of it. Khadi produced in Rajputana is perhaps even cheaper than that produced in Bihar. Some varieties of khadi produced in Tamil Nad are certainly cheaper. I do not see any inconvenience arising out of this. Our aim is through khadi activity to enable poor persons to maintain themselves wherever they live. In doing so, the expense is higher at some places and lower at others. We should take care to see that the larger portion of the amount finds its way into the pockets of the poor. It is indeed one of the functions of the Charkha Sangh to see that this is done with the greatest care; in fact, this is being done. It should also be borne in mind that Bengal is the only province which uses almost all the khadi that it produces.

Now the last question:[1]

I know that there has been a reduction in the price of khadi all over the country. This applies to khadi in Bengal too. The price can be said to have been reduced even where the quality has improved but there has been no corresponding increase in the price. Ordinarily, it may be said with regard to the whole of the country that, on an average, there has been a minimum of 25% reduction in the prices. At some places and in respect of certain varieties, the price has gone down by 50%. At present, more attention is being paid towards improvement in quality.

It is to be wished that all lovers of khadi take the same amount of interest in it as is shown by the Bihari lover of khadi. By taking more interest, they help in allaying doubts. Hence, I wish that those who have honest doubts should get them resolved through the columns of *Navajivan*.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 20-11-1927

[1] "Why is it that, although continuous attempts are being made day and night, no reduction can be made in the price of khadi? There has been no reduction at all in the price (of khadi) in Bengal in the past two years; it must be admitted of course that there has been some improvement in the quality of the cloth."

192. SPEECH AT NUWARA ELIYA

November 20, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I thank you for your address and your purse. Everywhere my speeches have been interpreted both into Sinhalese and Tamil but here as I see the majority of you are Tamils I suggested to the Chairman of the Reception Committee to dispense with Sinhalese in order to save your time and my time and I hope that you will accept this arrangement. You, sir, have apologized for the simplicity of your address. There was not only no necessity for an apology, on the contrary you deserve my hearty congratulations for saving money. Claiming as I do to represent the famished and famishing millions of India, I cannot be too strict, nor can you be too strict about every farthing that you collect in saving anything else for the starving millions. I grudge every rupee that is spent on flowers and in ornamentation whatsoever. You will remember that every rupee that you so save means sixteen starving women getting their meals and it is on their behalf that I have come to your island to ask for your support. It has been a matter of great joy to me to find the people here liberally responding to my appeal. I understand that this purse represents the voluntary collections made by labourers and *kanganis*[1] and the like. I can make no return save empty thanks for this generosity, but I do know that God will bless every one of you who has voluntarily contributed to this purse. Every cent, every rupee that you may spend on your pleasures, scents, toys, ornamentation and flimsy fineries is only so much waste, but you may depend upon it that every rupee, every guinea given to this cause will return to you tenfold and if there are in this assembly any people who have not yet contributed to this purse or not been approached by anybody I would ask them to silently send in their gift to me while I am speaking to you. I am emboldened to make this appeal, because of the very generous response the meeting at Badulla made to me and the appeal at the meeting itself. You know that every home in the numerous villages of India has become at the present moment dilapidated because the poor people had been deprived of the only industry they had to supplement their resources from agriculture.

[1] Labour contractors

I hope that whilst the friends are making their collections no noise will be made, but please preserve silence while I speak, for I want to make a personal appeal to labourers whom I see in front and behind me from neighbouring estates surrounding this beautiful hill.

I want you, the labourers, to understand that I am but one of you and have been casting my lot with you ever since my visit to South Africa nearly 30 years ago. I want you to realize and recognize your own dignity as men and women. Do not despise yourselves or allow others to despise you because you are labourers. There never was and never is shame in honest labour. Without the existence of labour around these hills, their present condition would have been utterly impossible, but there are some well-defined conditions attached to your dignity, if you will preserve it. The first and foremost is that you must not go near the liquor shops. Drink is a devil in whose net you must not find yourselves. A man who comes under the influence of drink forgets the distinction between his wife and sisters. You should therefore, if you have not already given up, make a sacred resolve that you will not pollute your lips by the touch of that cursed water, but if after having fed and clothed yourselves and your families, you have got some money to lay by, keep it for a better purpose, keep it for educating your children, keep it for a rainy day when your hands and your feet can no longer work and the time comes for you to rest. All these savings would come in useful to you and I would ask you to use a portion of the same for people much poorer than yourselves in the name of God.

I know also that many of you are not leading pure lives. It is wrong to live an impure life. God has made man so that he of all beings on earth can distinguish between women who are his sisters, daughters, mother and wife. Refuse to live under conditions which will make it impossible for you to live a life of discipline, purity and restraint. I wish that my voice will be heard by your employers, as I know that they will see to it that they take a personal interest in your daily life. I know that many of you use your idle hours, your spare hours, in gambling your time and money away. You must not use your idle hours in this criminal fashion. Since you have sufficient open air life in your plantations, I would advise you to employ your leisure hours to cultivate your minds and if you have leisure spend your time in spinning for yourself and for your family.

I understand when you come to this island you bring with you the curse of untouchability. I tell you that there is no warrant in

Hinduism for untouchability. It is wrong to consider a single human being as untouchable, and if you will bear in mind all the things I told you, you will find yourselves better men and better women for having practised these things.

I am reminded by a letter received from Colombo that hook-worm is prevalent in many of the estates in Ceylon. It is a disease wholly avoidable and it surprises me to find that your own employers have not been able to give you lessons to avoid this wretched disease. I know positively that this disease is due only to filth. The letter that I have received says that there are some remedies which are quite good and if there are such, you can certainly resort to them, but the better thing is to prevent the disease, seeing that it is so easily preventible and the chief thing is to regulate your sanitary life. Your methods of sanitation are not of the best kind, I am sorry to confess. I know that if planters will take proper measures to teach you sanitation, they will be doing their duty to themselves, to you and to humanity. That disease comes from polluting the water and using that water for all sorts of purposes. If you will only understand and learn the elementary lessons in sanitation and if you do not pollute the water which you drink by washing or dirtying it, you will never get hook-worm. I thank you again for your address and generous purse.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 85-8

193. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

KANDY,
Monday, November 21, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letters.

Chhotelal should go out for a change, if he cannot improve. See what he will do. Tyagiji should principally live on milk if he will avoid another attack. Bhansali continues to cause me anxiety. Am glad Parnerkar has gone. It is better that he does not return till he is quite restored. Surendra will quite substitute you whilst you are away. I am due to reach Berhampur 2nd December. You will wire or write to Babu Niranjan Patnaick, Khadi Depot, Berhampur (Ganjam Dist.) the exact date and time of your arrival and the route. Do not burden yourself with more than two or three books on dairying. I do not think you will have so much time as you imagine for study in Orissa.

I remember having told you that you may not get books or things *ad lib* from mother. But the rule may be relaxed for dairy literature. She may send you all the books that experts of her acquaintance may recommend.

This is probably my last letter before we meet.

Love,

BAPU

From the original C.W. 5294. Courtesy: Mirabehn

194. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

November 21, 1927

DEAR SATIS BABU,

So you have lost a brother now. These deaths of dear ones teach us much if we would learn from them. Like births, they are ever with us. This knowledge is in the possession of everyone and yet how few of us are able to profit by it when the time comes. And somehow or other we Hindus who should be least affected by deaths are, or it seems to me to be, the worst off. Have you read the disgraceful wailings depicted in the *Mahabharata* over the war deaths? I write this not for you. I feel that you are comparatively composed. I [have doubts][1] about Hemaprabha Devi. I would like you to translate this with your own commentary to her.

I never got the consignment of khadi you promised to send. If you had, I think I would have sold it all here. I reach Berhampur, Ganjam District, on 2nd December I expect. I leave Ceylon on 29th. Leave Colombo on 25th. Reach Jaffna 26th.

With love,

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1579

[1] The words are not decipherable.

195. LETTER TO HEMAPRABHA DEVI DAS GUPTA

KANDY,
Monday [November 21, 1927][1]

DEAR SISTER,

I have your letter. I hope you did not grieve over the death of Satis Babu's brother. Why rejoice over birth and grieve over death? This is the teaching of the *Gita*. I can see you suffer much because Nikhil is still keeping bad health. How can I console you? If we cannot utilize all our wisdom in such a situation, it is no use at all. Realize this and pass your time in the performance of your duty, looking upon it as the source of happiness and peace.

The Ceylon tour is certainly strenuous, but the country is very beautiful [and] the weather is cool. Therefore, it is not too much a strain.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1660

196. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Monday, November 21 [1927][2]

SISTERS,

I have as yet received no letter from you. I have to wander about so much in Ceylon that it is difficult to get my mail direct from Colombo.

When I look at the Ceylonese women, I think of our Ashram women. I wrote to you upon the simplicity of the dress of ordinary women. On the other hand, women of higher social standing have grown so fashionable that they put on nothing but silk and brocades. In my eyes, it does not suit them at all. I always ask myself, "Whom do these women want to please by putting on such clothes?" There is no *purdah* system here. Why women adorn themselves, you can tell better than I. But seeing all this, I

[1] Gandhiji was in Kandy on this date.
[2] From the reference to the Ceylon tour

felt that it was good that we had established the tradition in the Ashram of wearing the fewest possible ornaments. I cannot of course say that in the Ashram we put on no ornaments at all. Write and tell me if you don't agree.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3677

197. LETTER TO ASHRAM CHILDREN

November 21, 1927

The natural beauty of Kandy is so great that one would simply gaze for ever. There are hills, trees and greenery all round and nowhere does one see a dry spot. I very much enjoyed walking in solitude in such a place. Kakasaheb was talking to me on some matter. I was listening to him with my ears, but the eyes were engrossed in looking on God's play. I wonder why, with such temples in existence, men spend lakhs and crores of rupees in erecting big temples so that people may meditate in them on God. How far has the existence of temples helped religion? Think on this question and let me know your conclusion.

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

198. LETTER TO V. L. PHADKE

Monday [November 21, 1927][1]

BHAISHRI MAMA,

I have your letter. Did you wish your article about Vartej to be published as soon as I had the opportunity to read it? I never knew that Mithubai's speech was published. It is true, however, that articles regarding flood relief have gone to the press direct. If your note about Vartej was something special you should have marked it as such and sent it direct to me. If it is desirable to move among the *Antyajas* in the Panchamahals, don't you think you yourself could do it? One must know the right method of moving amongst them; mustn't one? Keep on imploring

[1] From the postmark

Nanabhai. If you write to Kaka he would write . . . says Kaka. Your . . . remains with. . . . However he . . . does not . . . to have forgotten the matter.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

BHAISHRI MAMA
ANTYAJA ASHRAM
GODHRA
B.B.C.I. RLY.
INDIA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3818(2)

199. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, COLOMBO[2]

November 22, 1927

I am used to ladies' meetings where thousands of sisters came in their naturalness and there the hearts meet. I do not think I can say that about this stiff meeting.

He gave them a picture of the starving millions, and said:

When Mahendra came to Ceylon the children of the motherland were not starving either materially or spiritually, our star was in the ascendant and you partook of the glory. The children are starving today and it is on their behalf that I have come with the begging bowl, and if you do not disown kinship with them, but take some pride in it, then you must give me not only your money but your jewellery as sisters in so many other places have done. My hungry eyes rest upon the ornaments of sisters, whenever I see them heavily bedecked. There is an ulterior motive too in asking ornaments, viz., to wean the ladies from the craze for ornaments and jewellery. And if I may take the liberty that I do with other sisters, may I ask you what it is that makes

[1] The source, a postcard, has been damaged.

[2] Published under the title "The Haunting Memory"; Mahadev Desai says of this meeting: "Gandhiji had looked forward to a meeting like one of those women's meetings in South India attended by thousands. But instead there was a meeting of little more than a dozen ladies in the drawing room of a stately palace. It was a misnomer to call it a public meeting. . . . For a moment it looked as though he would say nothing and go to the next function on his programme. But he saw that the ladies were not to blame . . . . So he gave them a talk."

woman deck herself more than man? I am told by feminine friends that she does so for pleasing man. Well, I tell you if you want to play your part in the world's affairs, you must refuse to deck yourselves for pleasing man. If I was born a woman, I would rise in rebellion against any pretension on the part of man that woman is born to be his plaything. I have mentally become a woman in order to steal into her heart. I could not steal into my wife's heart until I decided to treat her differently than I used to do, and so I restored to her all her rights by dispossessing myself of all my so-called rights as her husband. And you see her today as simple as myself. You find no necklaces, no fineries on her. I want you to be like that. Refuse to be the slaves of your own whims and fancies, and the slaves of men. Refuse to decorate yourselves, don't go in for scents and lavender waters; if you want to give out the proper scent, it must come out of your heart, and then you will captivate not man, but humanity. It is your birthright. Man is born of woman, he is flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone. Come to your own and deliver your message again.

And he cited for them the example of Sita defiant in her purity, and Miss Schlesin who with her defiant purity and innate fearlessness commanded in South Africa the adoration of thousands including amongst them fierce Pathans, robbers and questionable characters, and rounded off by telling them wherein true honour lies.

Do you know the hideous condition of your sisters on plantations? Treat them as your sisters, go amongst them and serve them with your better knowledge of sanitation and your talents. Let your honour lie in their service. And is there not service nearer home? There are men who are rascals; drunken people who are a menace to society. Wean them from their rascality by going amongst them as fearlessly as some of those Salvation Army girls who go into the dens of thieves and gamblers and drunkards, fall on their necks and at their feet, and bring them round. The service will deck you more than the fineries that you are wearing. I will then be a trustee for the money that you will save and distribute it amongst the poor.

I pray that the rambling message that I have given you may find a lodgment in your hearts.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 16-21

200. SPEECH AT ZAHIRA COLLEGE, COLOMBO

November 22, 1927

It has indeed given me great pleasure to be able to visit this College.

You have reminded me of the happy days I spent in South Africa. Those were days when my life was almost wholly cast in the midst of my Mussalman countrymen and it was early in 1893 that I found myself in the company of some of the finest Mussalmans it has been my good fortune to meet, as also to influence. It therefore does not surprise me that you have invited me to meet you in this hall.

Maulana Shaukat Ali when he returned from Ceylon gave me what he said was a message from the Mussalmans of Ceylon to hasten to Ceylon as soon as possible. But the work in which both he and I were engaged made it impossible for me to come here at that time.

Those of you who are in the habit of reading Indian newspapers will know that just before I embarked for Colombo I had the pleasure of meeting the professors and boys of the Jamia College at Delhi. I have not got the time to give you a set speech, because there are other appointments waiting for me, but I would summarize the speech[1] I gave to the boys in Delhi.

All the education that you are receiving in this great College will be reduced to nothing if it is not built on the foundation of a pure character.

As I was reading your magazines I could not help admiring the zeal with which the work was done here and the marvellous progress that has been made in a few years. But as I was reading the report that was read before the Governor on the occasion of the foundation-laying ceremony, I could not help feeling how nice it would be if we could raise a foundation of good character so that stones on stones might be raised thereon and we might look back with joy and pride upon that edifice. But character cannot be built with mortar and stone. It cannot be built by other hands than your own. The Principal and the professors cannot give you character from the pages of books. Character-

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi", 2-11-1927.

building comes from their very lives and, really speaking, it must come from within yourselves.

As I was studying Christianity, Hinduism and other great faiths of the world, I saw that there was a fundamental unity moving amidst the endless variety that we see in all religions, viz., Truth and Innocence. You must take the word 'Innocence' literally, that is, to mean non-killing and non-violence, and if you boys will take your stand definitely always on Truth and Innocence, you will feel that you have built on solid foundation.

I am grateful for the generous purse you have presented to me. It is meant for finding work for the starving millions of India. These consist of Hindus, Mussalmans and Christians. Therefore you have, by giving me this donation, established a link between these starving millions and yourselves, and in doing so you have done a thing which is pleasing to God. It will be a very feeble link if you do not know the purpose for which this is going to be used. These moneys are utilized for finding work among men and women for the production of cloth like that you find on my person. But all this money will be useless if you cannot find the people to wear khadi so manufactured.

It is possible now for us to satisfy every taste and fashion. If you will forge a lasting and continuing link with the masses of India you will henceforth clothe yourselves in khadi.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 88-90

201. SPEECH TO PARSIS, COLOMBO

November 22, 1927

You have apologized for your inability to present me with a proper address. Your address is written on your hearts which you have laid bare before me.

A strange relationship binds me to the Parsis. The affection they have showered on me, a Hindu, wherever I have come in contact with them is something inexplicable and impregnable.

Wherever I have gone Parsis have not failed to find me out. When scarcely anyone knew me, when the burden of Mahatmaship had not yet been imposed on me, a Parsi befriended me and made me his own. I refer to the late Parsee Rustomji of South African fame.

When the South African Europeans mobbed and lynched me on my landing at Durban in 1896 Parsee Rustomji harboured me

and my family at grave risk to his person and property. The mob threatened to burn his house, but nothing daunted Rustomji who gave us shelter under his roof. Ever since, throughout his lifelong friendship with me he helped me and my movements and in 1921 his was the biggest donation to the Tilak Swaraj Fund from an Indian abroad.

Mr. (afterwards Sir) Ratan Tata sent me a cheque for Rs. 25,000 when I most needed it during the satyagraha in South Africa. And Dadabhai Naoroji. How can I describe my debt to him? He took me to his bosom when I was an unknown and unbefriended youth in England, and today his grand-daughters are a tower of strength to me in my khadi work.

I ask you to continue the tradition of your forefathers, I ask you not to forget their simplicity and their frugal ways by aping the showy fashion of the West. Your community has been known throughout the world for its charity, and luxury-loving ease and extravagance go ill together with charity. I am glad to find that you here have retained some of your simplicity and your Indian ways. You are known for your business capacity and your people have made fortunes wherever they have gone. But remember that it is not their riches but their large-hearted charity that made them famous.

May God help you to keep up that tradition unbroken.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 99-100

202. SPEECH TO CEYLON NATIONAL CONGRESS, COLOMBO

November 22, 1927

I thank you for the words that you have spoken about myself, and I thank you also for the pleasant reminder that you have given me of the ancient times when the connection between India and Ceylon was established. I do not propose, however, to take up your time by giving my own views upon what that connection means to India, means to you, and shall I say to the world. But I will say this that in my opinion the teaching of Gautama Buddha was not a new religion. In so far as I have been able to study those lofty teachings, I have come to the conclusion—and that conclusion I arrived long before now—that Gautama was one of the greatest of Hindu reformers, and that he left upon the people of his own time and upon the future generations an in-

delible impress of that reformation. But it would be wrong on my part to take up your time and my own, limited as it is, to consider that very fascinating subject. I therefore come to mundane matters relating to the Congress.

In India the Congress is a word to conjure with. It is an association with an unbroken record of over 40 years. And it enjoys today a reputation which no other political association in India enjoys, and that is, in spite of the many ups and downs which the Congress in common with all worldly institutions and associations has gone through. I therefore take it for granted that in adopting this name you are also, as far as may be and is necessary, following the traditions of the parent body if I may call the National Congress of India by that name. And on that assumption I venture this afternoon to place before you my views of what a Congress should be, or how the National Congress in India has been able to build up its reputation. I know that after all my connection with the Congress in India does not stretch over a period longer than 10 years—or I may now say, more accurately speaking, 12 years. But as you are aware that 12 years' association is so close, and I have been so much identified with the Congress that probably what I may say might be taken with some degree of authority. But in one way my association with the parent body is nearly 30 years old now.

It was in South Africa in the year 1893 when I went there that I dreamt about the Congress. I knew something about its activities, though I had never attended a single one of the annual sessions of that great institution. Just like you, as a youngster, I took my proper share in founding an association called the Natal Indian Congress after the fashion of the Indian National Congress, making such changes as were necessary to suit the local conditions. I shall therefore be able to give you the results of my experience of public life in connection with such institutions dating back to 1893. And what I learnt even so early as 1894 was that any such association, to be really serviceable, to deserve the name of being called 'national', requires a fair measure—I was going to say a great measure—of self-sacrifice on the part of the principal workers. I have no hesitation in confessing to you that that ideal I found to be very difficult to put into practice even in that little community, because we were after all a very small body of men and women in Natal, which is the smallest province of South Africa, where we had a population of nearly 60 thousand Indians of whom the vast majority had no vote in the deliberations of the Congress.

The Congress however was a representative institution and fully representative of things that interested the people, because it constituted itself the trustee of the welfare of those men. But I must not linger over the history of that institution. Even in that small body we found bickerings and a desire more for power than for service, a desire more for self-aggrandizement than for self-effacement, and I have found during my 12 years' association with the parent body also that there is a continuous desire for self-seeking and self-aggrandizement; and for you as for us who are still striving to find our feet, who have still to make good the claims for self-expression and self-government, self-sacrifice, self-effacement, and self-suppression are really absolutely necessary and indispensable for our existence and for our progress.

I do not profess to have studied your politics during the brief stay that I have made here, I do not know the internal working of this organization, I do not know how strong it is, and how popular it is. I only hope it is strong and is popular. I hope you are free from the blemishes that I have just mentioned. It is, I know, a pleasurable pastime (and I have indulged in it sufficiently as you know) to strive against the powers that be, and to wrestle with the government of the day, especially when that government happens to be a foreign government and a government under which we rightly feel we have not that scope which we should have, and which we desire, for expansion and fullest self-expression. But I have also come to the conclusion that self-expression and self-government are not things which may be either taken from us by anybody or which can be given us by anybody. It is quite true that if those who happen to hold our destinies, or seem to hold our destinies in their hands, are favourably disposed, are sympathetic, understand our aspirations, no doubt it is then easier for us to expand. But after all self-government depends entirely upon our own internal strength upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds. Indeed, self-government which does not require that continuous striving to attain it and to sustain it is not worth the name. I have therefore endeavoured to show both in word and in deed that political self-government, that is, self-government for a large number of men and women, is no better than individual self-government, and therefore it is to be attained by precisely the same means that are required for individual self-government or self-rule, and so as you know also, I have striven in India to place this ideal before the people, in season and out of season, very often much to the disgust of those who are merely politically minded.

I belong to that body of political thought which was dominated by Gokhale. I have called him my political guru: not that everything that he said or did I accepted or accept today, but just because the moving force of his life (as I who came in the closest touch with him came to understand) was his intense desire to 'spiritualize politics'. This was his own expression in the preamble to the prospectus of the Servants of India Society, of which he was the founder and the first president. He makes the deliberate statement that he founded that Society in order to introduce spirituality into politics. He had studied the politics not only around him in his own country but had been a close and careful student of history. He had studied the politics of all the countries of the world and having been keenly disappointed to see a complete divorce between politics and spirituality, he endeavoured to the best of his ability, and not without some success—I was almost going to say not without considerable success—to introduce that element into politics. And so it was that he adopted the name of the Servants of India for his Society, which is now serving India in a variety of ways.

I do not know whether what I am saying commends itself to you or not, but if I am to show my gratitude for all the kindness that you have lavishly showered upon me during my brief visit to this beautiful country, if I am to show it in truth, I can only tell you what I feel and not what will probably please you or tickle you. You know that this particular thing—truth—is an integral part of our Congress creed. And we have therefore in the creed the attainment of swaraj by legitimate and non-violent means.

You will find that I have not been tired of insisting upon truth and non-violence at any cost. Given these two conditions, in my humble opinion, you can hurl defiance at the mightiest power on earth—and still come away not only yourselves unscathed but you will leave your so-called adversary also uninjured and unhurt. For the time being he may misunderstand the non-violent blows that you deal, he may misrepresent you also, but you don't need to consult his feelings or his opinions so long as you are fulfilling these two absolute conditions. Then it is well with you, and you can march forward with greater speed than otherwise. The way may appear to be long, but if you take my experience extending over a period of 30 years uninterruptedly, without exception, I give you my assurance that it is the shortest cut to success. I have known no shorter road. I know that it very often requires great faith and immense

patience, but if this one thing is fixed on our minds, then there is no other way open to a politician, if he is to serve not himself, but the whole nation. If once that determination is made, then comes faith and with that faith comes also patience, because you know that there is no better or shorter road.

I am afraid as we are in India, so are you cut up into groups and communities. I read casually only today something in praise of communalism. In India also we have this blight—we call it a blight, we don't praise it. Even those who believe in communalism say frankly that it is a necessary evil to be got rid of at the earliest possible moment.

In India we have to deal with 300 million people. But you have to deal with such a small mass of men and women that it is a matter for pain and surprise for me to find a defence—an energetic defence—of this communalism. But I know that it is totally opposed to nationalism. And you want, as you must want, swaraj. It is not the birthright of one country only; swaraj is the birthright of all countries—I feel constrained to say, the birthright even of the savage as of the most civilized man—how much more of people who have got a culture second to none in the world, a people who have got all that Nature can give you, have got resources in men and money and in natural gifts, who have everything that goes to make you a powerful nation on this globe of ours, yet at the present moment you seem to be far away from it.

I don't suppose that any of you flatters himself or herself with the belief that you have at the present moment anything like what I should consider self-government. And that self-government you will not have—I was going to say you cannot have— unless you speak with the voice of one nation and not with the voice of Christians, Mussalmans, Buddhists, Hindus, Europeans, Sinhalese, Tamils and Malays. I can't understand that.

As you, sir, said in your remarks that you represent all races and religions, I congratulate you upon that, and if you are really capable of vindicating that claim, all honour to you, and not only the Congress but you then deserve to be copied by us. We, an older institution, are not able to vindicate that claim. We are striving; we are groping in the dark; we are trying to suppress provincialism; we are trying to suppress racialism; we are trying to suppress religionism, if I may coin a word; we are trying to express nationalism in its fullest form, but I am ashamed to confess to you that we are still far from it. But it is given to you to outstrip us and set us an example. It is easy for you,

much easier for you than for us, but a condition indispensable for that is that some of you at least will have to give your whole time to this and not only your whole time but your whole selves and you will have to suppress yourselves.

As Gokhale said, politics had degenerated into a sort of game for leisure hours, whereas he desired that, for some at least, politics should be a wholetime occupation, it should engross the attention of some of the ablest men of the country. It is only when truth, fearlessness and non-violence are dominant factors that a person can devote himself unselfishly to the service of the nation.

I hope that in your Congress you have such a body of men and women, because woman must play her part side by side with man. As I said, in India our one limb is paralysed. Women have got to come up to the level of man. As I said to the ladies at a meeting today, they may not copy man in all the wildness of his nature, but they must come to the level of man in all that is best in him. Then in this island you will have a beautiful blend, then you will be worthy of what Nature has so profusely showered on you.

As I travelled from Kandy to Colombo this morning, I asked myself what the Congress was going to do in order to save Ceylon, whom God had blessed with enough natural intoxication, from the intoxication of that fiery liquid. I make a humble suggestion to you. If the Congress is to be fully national, it cannot leave this fundamental social question. In this temperate climate, where no artificial stimulant is necessary, it is a shame that a substantial part of your income should be derived from liquor. You may not know what is happening to the labourers whose trustees you are, whose will is only once expressed when they cast their votes in your favour. I saw thousands upon thousands of them at Hatton. I have lost all sense of smell, but a friend told me that some of them were stinking with liquor. They had gone mad over the fact that one of their own was going in their midst, and had broken the bounds of restraint. Well, I know what you will say. You will say it was the result of excess and that it is not bad to drink in moderation. Well, I tell you, I have found so many making that claim and ultimately proving dismal failures. I have come from cities of South Africa where I have seen Africans, Europeans, Indians rolling in gutters under the influence of drink, I have seen proctors, advocates and barristers rolling in gutters and then the policemen taking them away in order to hide their shame. I have seen captains mad with drink leaving

their cabin to the chief officer, or defiling the cabin where they were supposed to keep guard over the safety of their passengers. Claiming, as you do, allegiance to India, and endorsing, as you do, your connection with the story of the *Ramayana*, you should be satisfied with nothing but *Ramarajya* which includes swaraj. When the evil stalks from corner to corner of this enchanting fairyland, you must take up the question in right earnest and save the nation from ruin.

Then there is the other thing, untouchability. You consider the Rodiyas[1] as untouchables and their women are not allowed to cover their upper parts. It is high time for the Congress to take up the question of the Rodiyas, make them their own and enrol them as volunteers in their work. Democracy is an impossible thing until the power is shared by all, but let not democracy degenerate into mobocracy. Even a pariah, a labourer, who makes it possible for you to earn your living, will have his share in self-government. But you will have to touch their lives, go to them, see their hovels where they live packed like sardines. It is up to you to look after this part of humanity. It is possible for you to make their lives or mar their lives. The Indian National Congress deals with both of these questions. They are living planks in our programme. I urge upon you, if you want to make your Congress truly national and truly representative of the poorest and meanest people of Ceylon, you will add these items to your programme, if you have not already added them, and introduce a full measure of spirituality into your politics and everything else will follow; self-government which is your birthright will drop in your hand like a fully ripe fruit from a laden tree. May this message produce its due effect and penetrate your hearts.

Young India, 1-12-1927

[1] The story goes that a Rodiya, whose duty was to provide venison to the king, substituted human flesh, and hence the caste was outlawed.

203. SPEECH TO TAMIL UNION, COLOMBO

November 22, 1927

I am deeply grateful to you for the address that you have given me, and also for the purse for my mission.

I know that everywhere I have gone in this fair island, Tamil friends have surrounded me with overwhelming kindness and given me of their best for the cause which has brought me here. It therefore gives me no surprise that you, the members of this union, decided to give a separate purse on your own behalf, but I know this also that you are well able to pay what you have paid, and it is possible for you, if you understood the full significance of my message, to pay even much more than you have done.

You, sir, have conferred on me a favour by asking me to tell this meeting how the funds that I am now collecting are being utilized and what I expect from the distribution of these funds.

There is in India an association called the All-India Spinners' Association. It has got its own constitution and its affairs are administered by a Council of nine, of which I am the President for the first five years of its existence. One of the millionaire merchants is the Treasurer of this Association. His name is Seth Jamnalal Bajaj. At the present moment he acts also on my behalf as Chairman of the Council. Its Secretary is a moneyed man's son named Shankerlal Banker. The other members of the Council are equally well known and known also for their self-sacrifice. This Council operates through its branches all over India. All accounts are periodically audited by chartered accountants.

Through this agency over 1,500 villages all over India are being served today, and in these villages at least 50,000 spinners who are Hindus, Mussalmans and in some cases even Christians and others are being given work through the spinning-wheel. Whereas before the advent of the spinning-wheel, they had no work whatsoever to do for four months in the year, now since the advent of the spinning-wheel, they got between one and two annas per day whilst they are working the wheel. Of these, the largest amount is spent in Tamil Nadu because the largest number of spinners are to be found in those districts of Tamil Nadu where there is almost chronic famine. Often women walk several miles to receive cotton or slivers and to deliver yarn and receive the money earned.

Behind these spinners several thousand weavers have been reclaimed, as also dhobis, whose special function is to wash such khadi, dyers, printers, and traders.

Of this distribution over this vast area covering 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad, nearly 1,000 workers of the clerical class are employed, earning anything between 20 to 30 or even 40 rupees per month. There are some who get even as much as Rs. 75 or even Rs. 150 per month, but these are very few. On the top of these are a band of honorary workers who get nothing whatsoever, but who give their work for the love of this service. All the provincial offices and sub-provincial offices are also under supervision and are required to keep regular accounts which have to be periodically audited.

Through this agency over 20 lakhs rupees worth of khaddar was manufactured and sold last year. This work is capable of indefinite extension, provided we get men first and money next. Experience extending now over five or six years has told us that if we get sufficient monetary assistance from people, if we get willing customers and if we get a number of qualified workers, it is merely a question of time when we should be able to serve all the 7,00,000 villages in India. I have, therefore, not hesitated to call it the largest co-operative effort in the world.

Satisfactory though the results that I have described to you are, they are by no means brilliant or at all enough for the work or the end that I have in view, but it merely awaits conversion of all those who feel for India like yourselves. It may flatter my pride, but I know that it is not a satisfactory state of affairs so long as I have got to travel about in order to convert people to the creed, as it were, of khadi and to induce them to part with their superfluous cash. If you took this simple work of collecting funds and of finding customers for khadi from off my shoulder, I can assure you that I can utilize my talents as an expert spinner for organizing these villages and giving you the best and the cheapest khadi.

I know that you cannot be all spinning experts in a moment, but you can all become khadi experts in the sense of becoming khadi buyers and collectors of money. I am painfully aware that the country is making an uneconomical use of my abilities by compelling me to wander about from place to place in search of money and in search of custom for khadi.

I speak thus heart to heart to you for the simple reason that during my tour of Tamil Nadu from which I have come here and from which you are drawn I have been so overwhelmed with

kindness and generosity especially in Chettinad that you have created in me a passion for more.

You have, I understand, a sporting club and it is a good thing. I want you to become sportsmen also of the higher order. I want you to become sportsmanlike enough to share your riches with those who are famishing in India, not by flinging a handful of rice at them, but by finding work in the manner that I wish to train them for.

I would like you also to be sportsmanlike enough to share your abilities or capacity for service with those who are labourers in this island. That is social service which requires the abilities of many young men whom I see in front of me. I must not take up your time in order to relate my experiences of thousands of labourers I saw between Badulla and Hatton. On the one hand, I was glad to see them and on the other, it showed me how much there was for you, young men, to do for them who are bleeding away and do not know how to lead a pure life.

You have heard my message. If there are any who have not yet paid or not paid enough, please send your donations on to me and if you will establish a living tie between these poor millions and yourselves, you will follow up your donations by making a resolve henceforth not to buy any cloth which is not khadi.

I thank you once more for your generosity.

The Hindu, 28-11-1927 and *With Gandhiji in Ceylon*

204. SPEECH AT PANADURA

November 23, 1927

The Mahatma, having inquired about Mr. Arthur V. Dias, who was absent, said that he would wish to be face to face with the father of the temperance movement in Panadura. He had heard of this temperance worker who, he thought, was working in the same spirit as himself. He hoped the public of Panadura would strive further in the cause of temperance.

You will then earn not only the gratitude of the present generation but of generations to come. It has been my lot to be thrown among drunkards in various places. I have read copious literature relating to the evils of drink. I know of homes rendered desolate. I have known men, respectable men, ruined. And I have seen husbands turn monsters to their wives on account of that drink evil. A captain who was under the influence of liquor was nearly going to imperil the whole crew of a

ship where I was on board. You being in a tropical climate, there is no reason to warrant drinks. It is beastly—it is a sin against the Lord and humanity! The great labouring classes are becoming more and more useless under its deadly influence. Then there is untouchability, and among Buddhists also, in Ceylon.

He was informed by a certain gentleman of Kandy that there existed a sort of untouchability among Buddhists, although it was against Buddhism.

By whatever name you may call it, untouchability is bad. Where kindness has been taught, even to the very animals, there is no room for untouchability among men in Buddhism.

The Ceylon Daily News, 25-11-1927

205. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, GALLE

November 23, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am deeply grateful to you for the addresses and the collections presented to me just now.

Ever since my landing on the hospitable shores of this beautiful island of yours, I have been the recipient of great blessings and not the least among them is the benediction just recited by a number of boys and girls. A few minutes ago I received an address from your Municipal Council too and to the best of my ability I propose to give a combined reply, but I know you will thank me if I be as brief as possible as I don't wish you to be in the sun.

I have nothing different to say to Municipal Councillors from what I have to tell you, the citizens of this town.

I propose to repeat the hope I have been repeating day after day since I arrived in this island.

I hope that you will do your utmost to rid yourselves of the curse of drink and caste distinctions from this island. Gautama Buddha, whose life was one of continuous renunciation, has preached that his followers should not foul their mouth and poison their body by the use of liquor. Islam denounced drink in unmistakable terms. So far as I have seen of Christianity there is no warrant in the Christian doctrine for the use of liquor and I can give you my personal testimony as a Hindu that my religion considers it a sin to take liquor.

Even in this island you have imported from your Motherland the bane of communalism, but I hope that in our life of work for God and humanity we shall work shoulder to shoulder, as children of one common soil for the good of your country. Side by side with the sublime teachings of the Enlightened One, you have imported from India caste distinctions. Your adoption of the teachings of Buddha will remain incomplete, so long as you observe these distinctions. The spirit of democracy that now pervades the world demands that one should not be considered superior to another. All are sons and daughters of one divine essence.

Lastly, may I expect you to give a finishing touch to your donations and manifestations of regard to me by following the example of the Tiranagama Women's Association who, while giving me a reception at Hikkaduwa, intimated to me that they were going to organize a campaign to popularize khaddar among ladies.

It gives me great joy to see that Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians have united to help me to ameliorate the condition of the famishing millions of India. I pray to God that even as you have worked in unison on this occasion that you may work in unison for the good of your common Motherland.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 103-5

206. SPEECH AT MAHINDA COLLEGE, GALLE

November 24, 1927

It has given me the greatest pleasure to be able to be present at this very pleasant function[1]. You have paid me indeed a very great compliment and conferred on me a great honour by allowing me to witness your proceedings and making the acquaintance of so many boys.

I hope that this institution will progressively expand, as, I have no doubt, it deserves. I have come to know enough of this beautiful island and its people to understand that there are Buddhists enough in this country, not merely to support one such institution, but many such institutions. I hope, therefore, that this institution will never have to pine for want of material support, but having known something of the educational institutions both in South Africa and India, let me tell you that scholastic education

[1] Prize distribution

is not merely brick and mortar. It is true boys and true girls who build such institutions from day to day. I know some huge architecturally perfect buildings going under the name of scholastic institutions, but they are nothing but whited sepulchres. Conversely, I know also some institutions which have to struggle from day to day for their material existence, but which because of this very want, are spiritually making advance from day to day. One of the greatest teachers that mankind has ever seen and one whom you have enthroned as the only Royal Monarch in your hearts delivered his living message not from a man-made building, but under the shadow of a magnificent tree. May I also venture to suggest that the aim of a great institution like this should be to impart such instruction and in such ways that it may be open to any boy or girl in Ceylon.

I notice already that, as in India, so in this country, you are making education daily more and more expensive so as to be beyond the reach of the poorest children. Let us all beware of making that serious blunder and incurring the deserved reproach of posterity. To that end let me put the greatest stress upon the desirability of giving these boys instruction from A to Z through the Sinhalese language. I am certain that the children of the nation that receive instruction in a tongue other than their own commit suicide. It robs them of their birthright. A foreign medium means an undue strain upon the youngsters, it robs them of all originality. It stunts their growth and isolates them from their home. I regard therefore such a thing as a national tragedy of first importance, and I would like also to suggest that since I have known Sanskrit in India as the mother language, and since you have received all religious instruction from the teachings of one who was himself an Indian amongst Indians and who had derived his inspiration from Sanskrit writings that it would be but right on your part to introduce Sanskrit as one of the languages that should be diligently studied. I should expect an institution of this kind to supply the whole of the Buddhist community in Ceylon with textbooks written in Sinhalese and giving all the best from the treasures of old.

I hope that you will not consider that I have placed before you an unattainable ideal. Instances occur to me from history where teachers have made Herculean efforts in order to restore the dignity of the mother tongue and to restore the dignity of the old treasures which were about to be forgotten.

I am glad indeed that you are giving due attention to athletics and I congratulate you upon acquitting yourselves with dis-

tinction in games. I do not know whether you had any indigenous games or not. I should, however, be exceedingly surprised, and even painfully surprised, if I were told that before cricket and football descended upon your sacred soil, your boys were devoid of all games. If you have national games, I would urge upon you that yours is an institution that should lead in reviving old games. I know that we have in India many noble indigenous games just as interesting and exciting as cricket or football, also as much attended with risks as football is, but with the added advantage that they are inexpensive, because the cost is practically next to nothing.

I am no indiscriminate, superstitious worshipper of all that goes under the name of 'ancient'. I never hesitated to demolish all that is evil or immoral, no matter how ancient endeavour it may be, but with that reservation, I must confess to you that I am an adorer of ancient institutions and it hurts me to think that a people in their rush for everything modern despise all their ancient traditions and ignore them in their lives.

We of the East very often hastily consider that all that our ancestors laid down for us was nothing but a bundle of superstitions, but my own experience, extending now over a fairly long period of the inestimable treasures of the East has led me to the conclusion that, whilst there may be much that was superstitious, there is infinitely more which is not only not superstitious, but if we understand it correctly and reduce it to practice, gives life and ennobles one. Let us not therefore be blinded by the hypnotic dazzle of the West.

Again I wish to utter a word of caution against your believing that I am an indiscriminate despiser of everything that comes from the West. There are many things which I have myself assimilated from the West. There is a very great and effective Sanskrit word for that particular faculty which enables a man always to distinguish between what is desirable and what is undesirable, what is right and what is wrong—that word is known as *viveka*. Translated into English, the nearest approach is discrimination. I do hope that you will incorporate this word into Pali and Sinhalese.

There is one thing more which I would like to say in connection with your syllabus. I had hoped that I should see some mention made of handicrafts, and if you are not seriously teaching the boys under your care some handicrafts, I would urge you, if it is not too late, to introduce the necessary handicrafts known

to this island. Surely, all the boys who go out from this institution will not expect or will not desire to be clerks or employees of the Government. If they would add to the national strength, they must learn with great skill all the indigenous crafts, and as cultural training and as the symbol of identification with the poorest among the poor, I know nothing so ennobling as hand-spinning. Simple as it is, it is easily learnt. When you combine with hand-spinning the idea that you are learning it not for your own individual self, but for the poorest among the nation, it becomes an ennobling sacrament. There must be added to this sacrament some occupation, some handicraft which a boy may consider will enable him to earn his living in after life.

You have rightly found place for religious instruction. I have experimented with quite a number of boys in order to understand how best to impart religious instruction and whilst I found that book instruction was somewhat of an aid, by itself it was useless. Religious instruction, I discovered, was imparted by teachers living the religion themselves. I have found that boys imbibe more from the teachers' own lives than they do from the books that they read to them, or the lectures that they deliver to them with their lips. I have discovered to my great joy that boys and girls have unconsciously a faculty of penetration whereby they read the thoughts of their teachers. Woe to the teacher who teaches one thing with his lips, and carries another in his breast.

Now, just one or two sentences to boys only and I have done. As father of, you might say, many boys and girls, you might almost say of thousands of boys and girls, I want to tell you, boys, that after all you hold your destiny in your own hands. I do not care what you learn or what you do not learn in your school, if you will observe two conditions. One condition is that you must be fearlessly truthful against the heaviest odds under every circumstance imaginable. A truthful boy, a brave boy will never think of hurting even a fly. He will defend all the weak boys in his own school and help, whether inside or outside the school, all those who need his help. A boy who does not observe personal purity of mind and body and action is a boy who should be driven out of any school. A chivalrous boy would always keep his mind pure, his eyes straight and his hands unpolluted. You do not need to go to any school to learn these fundamental maxims of life, and if you will have this triple character with you, you will build on a solid foundation.

May then true ahimsa and purity be your shield for ever in your life. May God help you to realize all your noble ambition. I thank you once more for inviting me to take part in this function.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 105-9

207. SPEECH AT GIRLS' WEAVING INSTITUTE, AKMIMANA

November 24, 1927

[Gandhiji] said he was extremely gratified with having been presented with the address and the purse and he regarded it as an honour that he had been asked to lay the foundation-stone of the Akmimana Girls' Weaving Institute. He hoped the Institute would prosper. They might not all know that he, while in the course of acquainting himself with several useful matters, was also a weaver. In the course of learning spinning and weaving he discovered that any country that went in for weaving must also take up spinning. By this he meant that the weaving industry in terms of a country's self-reliance and self-dependence also included spinning and it would surprise them to hear that in the history of the great weaving industry in Lancashire itself weaving was preceded by spinning. He had not the time to dilate further on the subject but this much he would say that they in Ceylon required some kind of spinning and weaving as the motherland in India needed, if they aimed at making Ceylon a self-reliant and self-contained country.

The Mahatma also referred to the reference made in the address to the restoration of Buddha Gaya to Buddhists. He said that if someone who had the power gave him full authority and placed a pen in his hand the Buddhists would have Buddha Gaya restored to them that very minute. Unfortunately he had not the power to act as he would in the matter but he would assure them, he would try his best, his very best, to secure the restoration of Buddha Gaya to Buddhists as their very own concern, but above everything else they must not lose heart or relinquish hope. It was up to them to prosecute their quest since it was a well-accepted legal maxim that those who slept over obtaining their rights would never get them.

The speaker went on to say, referring to the subject of village life, that unless they banished drink their villages would be ruined. He was delighted to hear that morning that they had no taverns anywhere near those parts to disfigure their fair country. He would congratulate them on that achievement. He would entreat the number of Buddhist priests assembled in the hall to make every endeavour to put the people on the path of total abstinence. However, they should never be content with being just parochial. They should spread their activity further afield with a view to removing permanently and absolutely the curse of drink in order to save the lives of the population and leave the country unpolluted with drink.

Finally, he said the Buddha preached the doctrine of equality among persons. One's neighbour was as good as oneself. They would be unworthy devotees to their faith if they did not set about then and there to abolish caste distinctions.

The Ceylon Daily News, 3-12-1927

208. SPEECH AT MATARA

November 24, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am deeply obliged to you for all the addresses you have been good enough to present to me and the various purses. Chauffeurs, barbers and other friends have given their purses here on this platform. I deeply appreciate these purses from poor people. That shows that they had not forgotten those that were much poorer than themselves; but there was one purse that had not been announced and that is the cheque from your representative Mr. Obeysekere for Rs. 500. There are two opinions about that cheque; one is mine and that is that he has concealed his gift because of his modesty. But there is another opinion weightier than mine, perhaps because it is based upon experience, and that is Mr. Obeysekere has been too stingy and he did not want this Rs. 500 to be announced to be compared with the chauffeurs' purse[1], but I being a beggar and also a trustee cannot possibly judge between Mr. Obeysekere and his own generosity or stinginess. That judgement I may leave to you as his constituency to whom he might have misrepresented or represented properly as the case may be. You will, however, all accept, my sincere thanks for these gifts you have given me on behalf of the famishing millions of India. I can only give you my assurance that every rupee thrown into the purse is much more fruitful than the rupee lying in your pockets, for one rupee in my hands means 16 meals for 16 poor women spinners in India, who but for that rupee might have gone without that meal.

As he was piloting me to his beautiful place Mr. Obeysekere informed me that attempts were being made at Matara in order to induce hand-weaving. I congratulate you on that step and nothing will please me better than to learn within a few months that you at least in this land are able to clothe yourselves out of the cloth woven

[1] The Chauffeurs' Union had given a purse of Rs. 100.

with your own hands. But may I also ask you that whilst you are making preparations to clothe yourselves with cloth woven and spun in your own places, you will follow up your gifts by investing in khaddar whenever you have cause to buy cloth in future. Let me also point out to you that if you propose to become self-contained with reference to your clothing requirements, a foundation has to be made in hand-spinning.

Mahatmaji then went on to refer to the work of municipal and urban councils and earnestly pleaded that the vices of drink and caste should have no place in a Buddhist country.

The Ceylon Daily News, 30-11-1927

209. SPEECH TO LAW STUDENTS, COLOMBO

[*November 25, 1927*][1]

I am glad you have put this question[2]. For, I may say that if I cannot speak on this subject with authority, no one else can. For throughout my career at the bar I never once departed from the strictest truth and honesty.

Well, then, the first thing which you must always bear in mind, if you would spiritualize the practice of law, is not to make your profession subservient to the interests of your purse, as is unfortunately but too often the case at present, but to use your profession for the service of your country. There are instances of eminent lawyers in all countries who led a life of self-sacrifice, who devoted their brilliant legal talents entirely to the service of their country although it spelt almost pauperism for them. In India you have the instance of the late Mana Mohan Ghose. He took up the fight against the indigo planters and served his poor clients at the cost of his health, even at the risk of his life, without charging them a single pie for his labours. He was a most brilliant lawyer, yet he was a great philanthropist. That is an example that you should have before you. Or better still you can follow Ruskin's precept given in his book *Unto This Last*. 'Why should a lawyer charge fifteen pounds for his work,' he asks, 'whilst a carpenter for instance hardly gets as many shillings for his work?' The fees charged by lawyers are unconscionable everywhere. I confess, I myself have charged what I would now call

[1] Gandhiji was in Colombo on this date.

[2] How to spiritualize the legal profession?

high fees. But even whilst I was engaged in my practice, let me tell you I never let my profession stand in the way of my public service.

And there is another thing which I would like to warn you against. In England, in South Africa, almost everywhere, I have found that in the practice of their profession lawyers are consciously or unconsciously led into untruth for the sake of their clients. An eminent English lawyer has gone so far as to say that it may even be the duty of a lawyer to defend a client whom he knows to be guilty. There I disagree. The duty of a lawyer is always to place before the judges, and to help them to arrive at, the truth, never to prove the guilty as innocent. It is up to you to maintain the dignity of your profession. If you fail in your duty what shall become of the other professions? You, young men, claiming as you have just done to be the fathers of tomorrow, should be the salt of the nation. If the salt loses its savour wherewith shall it be salted?

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 35-7

210. SPEECH AT YOUNG MEN'S BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION, COLOMBO

November 25, 1927

At the outset Gandhiji pleaded for toleration. He did not claim to be a scholar in any sense of the term. His first introduction to any religious study was through a single book, viz, Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*, which fascinated and engrossed him. Ever since, the spirit of Buddha had haunted him, so much so that he had been accused of being a Buddhist in disguise. And as he had said on a previous occasion he accepted the accusation as a compliment though he knew that if he made any such claim it would be summarily rejected by orthodox Buddhists. As one, however, who had imbibed the spirit of Buddhism, he would reassert in all humility, but unhesitatingly, if in a different language, what he said on the previous occasion:

There are some conditions laid down in Hinduism for a proper prayerful study of religions. They are of a universal character. Remember also that Gautama was a Hindu of Hindus. He was saturated with the spirit of Hinduism, with the Vedic spirit, he was born and bred up in those exhilarating surroundings, exhilarating for the spirit, and so far as I am aware, he never rejected Hinduism, or the message of the Vedas. What he did was therefore to introduce a living reformation in the petrified faith

that surrounded him. I venture to suggest to you that *your study of Buddhism will be incomplete unless you study the original sources from which the Master derived his inspiration*, that is, unless you study Sanskrit and the Sanskrit scriptures. But your duty, if you are to understand the spirit of the Buddha and not the letter of Buddhism, does not end there. That study has those conditions which I am about to describe to you. Those conditions are that a man or a woman who approaches a study of religion has first of all to observe what are called the five *yamas*. They are the five rules of self-restraint and I will repeat them before you. First, *brahmacharya*, celibacy; the second is *satya*, truth; the third is ahimsa, absolute innocence, not even hurting a fly; the next condition is *asteya*, non-stealing, not merely not stealing in the ordinary sense in which the word is understood, but if you appropriate or even cast your greedy eyes on anything that is not your own, it becomes stealing. Lastly, *aparigraha*—a man, who wants to possess worldly riches or other things, won't be fit really to understand the spirit of the Buddha. These are the indispensable conditions. There are other conditions, but I am going into these because these are the fundamental ones, and Gautama before he attained his knowledge had conformed to all these rules, and conformed, as few of his contemporaries had ever done, to the spirit of those rules. I humbly suggest to you that you will not understand the spirit of the Buddha unless you have also yourselves conformed to these rules and then prayerfully tried to ascertain what the Master meant. It makes no difference that you know of him through all the books that have been written, but even these very books, I make bold to assure you, you will understand and you will interpret with a new light, immediately you have gone, first of all, through these preliminary observances. Look what many critics of Islam have done—how they have torn the very book, that millions of Mussalmans swear by, to pieces and held up the teachings of Islam to scorn. They were not dishonest men who wrote this criticism, they were honest men, they were not men who were not trying to search the truth, but they did not know the conditions that they had to fulfil before they could make any religious study. Again look at what the critics of Hinduism have done. I read many of those criticisms, trying to enter into the spirit of the critics but came to the conclusion that they did not know the A B C of Hinduism and that they were grossly misinterpreting Hinduism. Take Christianity itself. Many Hindus have misinterpreted Christianity. They approach the Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament in a carping

spirit, with preconceived notions. But why talk of the Hindus? Have I not read books written by Englishmen who, pretending to consider themselves atheists, have turned the Bible upside down, and put all the fiery writings into the hands of innocent men and women and thereby done grave injury to the simple people who read them? I have laid these points before the young men of this association because I am anxious that *you should be the pioneers of presenting Ceylon, and through Ceylon the world, with a real Buddhistic revival, that you should be the pioneers in presenting a living faith to the world, and not the dead bones of a traditional faith which the world will not grasp.*

The priests, whom I had seen by deputy, said they could not argue but that they could only say what the Master taught. It is all right, but today the spirit of enquiry is abroad. We have got to deal with that spirit. The world is trying to seek the truth, and thirsting for peace in the midst of this terrible strife. There is also the desire for knowing the truth, but as I have ventured to suggest to you, those, who made a scientific study of religion and those who gave their lives for arriving at the truth and those with whose bones the snows of the Himalayas are whitened, have left these treasures not merely for 300 millions of India, but they have left those treasures for everyone who cares to understand them, and they have said: 'We cannot deliver the truth to you.' It is incapable of being delivered through writings, it is incapable of being delivered with the lips, it is capable of being delivered only through life. It transcends reason. But it is not past experience. So they said: 'We tell you that such and such is the fact, but you will have to test it for yourselves. You will apply your reason, we do not want you to deaden your reason, but you yourselves, even as we, will come to the conclusion that reason which God has given is after all a limited thing, and that which is a limited thing will not be able to reach the limitless. Therefore, go through these preliminary conditions, even as when you want to study geometry or algebra, you have to go through preliminary processes, however trying and tiresome. Observe them and then you will find that what we tell you with our own experience will be also yours.'

I want to take you through only one illustration as to how the teaching of the Buddha is now not being observed. I have retained this part of my talk up to almost the very last moment except that I hinted at it in my speech at the Vidyodaya College.

You believe that Gautama taught the world to treat even the lowest creatures as equal to oneself. He held the life of even the

crawling things of the earth as precious as his own. It is an arrogant assumption to say that human beings are lords and masters of the lower creation. On the contrary, being endowed with greater things in life, they are trustees of the lower animal kingdom. And the great sage lived that truth in his own life. I read as a mere youngster the passage in *The Light of Asia* describing how the Master took the lamb on his shoulders in face of the arrogant and ignorant Brahmins who thought that by offering the blood of these innocent lambs they were pleasing God and he dared them to sacrifice a single one of them. His very presence softened the stony hearts of the Brahmins. They looked up to the Master, they threw away their deadly knives and every one of those animals was saved. Was this message given to the world in order to falsify it, as it is being falsified here? I feel that you who are the repositories of this great faith are not true to the spirit of the Master's teachings so long as you do not regard all animal creation as sacred, and you cannot do so, so long as you do not abstain from meat and delude yourselves into the belief that you are not guilty of the crime of that slaughter because someone else killed the animals for you. You entrench yourselves behind the wall of traditions. You say that the Master never prohibited meat-eating. I do not think so. If you would approach the teachings of the Master in the spirit indicated by me, and rub in the spirit of tradition, you will have a different vision and a different meaning. You will find that when the Master said, 'I do not prohibit you from meat-eating', he was preaching to a people who were, in Christian parlance, hard of hearts. It was because he wanted to make allowance for their weakness that he allowed them to eat it, and not because he did not know the logic of his own teaching. If animals could not be sacrificed to the gods above, how could they be sacrificed to the epicure in us? When he prohibited sacrifice he knew what he was saying. Did he not know that the animals were sacrificed to be ultimately eaten? Why do they sacrifice thousands of sheep and goats to the Goddess Kali in Calcutta—be it said to their discredit and the discredit of Hinduism—in spite of having received this message from the Hindu of Hindus—Gautama? Do they throw the carcases away in the Hooghly? No, they eat every bit of the meat with the greatest delight, thinking that it has been sanctified because of the presentation to Kali. So the Buddha said, if you want to do any sacrifice, sacrifice yourself, your lust, all your material ambition, all worldly ambition. That will be an ennobling sacrifice. May the spirit of the Buddha brood over this meeting and

enable you to measure and assimilate the meaning of the words that I have spoken to you.

Young India, 8-12-1927

211. SPEECH TO CEYLON INDIAN ASSOCIATION, COLOMBO[1]

November 25, 1927

I know you have here several political problems arising. The one maxim of conduct that I think should guide the life of those who come from another country to stay in the midst of a people of another country, as we do, is that we must throw in our lot entirely with the people of the country of our adoption. Their welfare must be our primary concern. Our own must be subordinate to theirs. That seems to be the only line consistent with dignity, and it follows along the lines of the great teaching that we should do unto others as we wish that they should do unto us. Thinking along these lines, as you know, I have repeatedly suggested to Englishmen in India that they should subordinate their own interests to the interests of the teeming millions of the country in which they are living, and nobody has questioned the propriety of that statement. There cannot be one law to govern the relations between ourselves and foreigners who come to our land and another law governing us when we go to another foreign land. And though I consider that Ceylon is not a foreign land and though it has given me the greatest pleasure to hear from the lips of the Sinhalese that they own India as their mother country, it is much better, when we wish to regulate our relations with them, that we regard them as foreigners. The safest rule of conduct is to claim kinship when we want to do some service and not to insist upon kinship when it is a matter of asserting a right. Indeed, I have applied this rule of life, which I call the golden rule of conduct, between communities and communities even in provincial inter-relations in India. For instance, whenever I have gone to Bengal or to Madras or to any other province but Gujarat, and wherever I have seen Gujarati settlements, I have not hesitated to submit to the Gujaratis that they must consider the welfare of the people of the province to which they go superior to their own. I know

[1] The speech was translated into Tamil by C. Rajagopalachari.

of no other method of preserving sweet relations in human affairs and I am fortified by my experience extending for a long period of years that wherever there has been an interruption in the observance of this golden rule which I have submitted to you, there have been bickerings and quarrels and even the breaking of heads. I have no doubt whatever that if you, my dear countrymen, will govern your conduct in accordance with the rule that I have submitted to you, you will cover yourselves with honour and glory and your conduct will redound to the credit of the whole of India whose deliverance we are seeking with all our might.

The Ceylon Daily News, 26-11-1927

212. SPEECH AT REDDIAR SANGAM, COLOMBO

November 25, 1927

I thank you for all these numerous addresses and equally numerous purses.

I see that as the time for my leaving Ceylon is drawing near, your hearts are extending and with your hearts, the frames of your addresses are also expanding. But you the Reddiar friends and others who really should have known me better might also have understood that if you gave me big framed addresses, you would also have to find me a place in which to keep these addresses in my Ashram at Sabarmati. If you, out of your generosity, offer to give me a few thousand rupees earmarked for the purpose of building such a house in which all your great and big addresses might be accommodated, I would have been obliged to say to you—if you have so much money to spare in order to enable me to build a house for these things—'Give me all this money and it will provide more food for the poor starving sisters in this world.' You should also have known that for years past I have declined to accept any costly gifts for my own personal use. As you at least should be aware, I have not hesitated at the very meetings where these addresses have been presented to sell them at auction without laying myself open to the charge of discourtesy. But in this beautiful island where I might be mistaken for a stranger I have out of delicate consideration for the feelings of the Sinhalese refrained from offering their addresses for auction. But here I know that you cannot possibly misunderstand me. Therefore I propose with your permission, which I anticipate, to convert them into money which will swell the amount of your purses and will go

to feed so many hungry mouths. I regard your addresses really as a temptation for me to do this thing, and therefore I shall not take up more of your time or my time by making any elaborate speech.

I would leave one or two thoughts with you before I leave Colombo. Since you are earning your bread in this beautiful island, I would ask you to live as sugar lives in milk. Even a cup of milk which is full up to the brim does not overflow when sugar is gently added to it; the sugar accommodating itself in the milk enriches its taste; in the same way I would like you to live in this island so as not to become interlopers and so as to enrich the life of the people in whose midst you may be living.

Take care that none of the vices we have in India are brought with you in this land in order to poison the life. Let us not bring with us to these shores the curse of untouchability. In the Kingdom of Great God there cannot be any superiority and inferiority. Let us make this world therefore the Kingdom of God instead of making it the kingdom of the devil, as sometimes it appears to become. Let our lives be absolutely pure, our eyes straight, our hands unpolluted and since you have so generously given me all these gifts, may I not ask you to make all your cloth purchases in khadi.

Friends, I would beseech you to join the great struggle against the curse of drink that is going on in this island. Not only will you refrain from drinking yourselves, but help the movement, and the communities themselves, to deliver them and establish complete prohibition in this land.

I thank you once more for all the kindness that you have showered on me which I shall never forget.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 115-6

213. *SPEECH AT FAREWELL MEETING, COLOMBO*

November 25, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for the words that you have spoken about me and your good wishes on your own behalf and on behalf of the citizens of Colombo. I thank you also for this generous purse. Good as the purse is, as it is announced here, I know and you ought to know that it is not the only purse that the citizens of Colombo have gladly given to me. Throughout my stay in Colombo, little by little, various associations and individuals have not only given me in public but have also been coming to my residence and giving me their own purses. I count all these handsome donations also as part of this purse.

In one way my visit to Ceylon draws to a close today though technically speaking I will be leaving your hospitable shores on the evening of the 29th from Jaffna. Somehow or other I feel that I am going to a different place in going to Jaffna. I am carrying away with me very pleasant recollections of your extraordinarily beautiful climate and equally pleasant recollections of the people of Ceylon. I assure you that I am leaving Colombo not without a heavy heart and if I could at all have managed it, I would certainly have stayed here longer. But I have in front of me a tour in Orissa, one of the most, or rather the most, afflicted parts of India. It is now suffering from a visitation of very heavy floods. I dare not therefore postpone that visit.

From His Excellency the Governor down to the pettiest official, from the great merchant class and other capitalists down to the poorest labourer I have experienced nothing but the warmest kindness and you, Sir, have truly stated that all the people without distinction of caste, colour or creed have united in showering their affection unstintedly upon me and so far as the object of my mission was concerned you have certainly realized fully the expectations that were raised by you.

I assure you that it would not require much pressure to bring me out again to Ceylon and as you have put it, for a leisurely stay if God spares that time for me and spares me for the purpose. But whether I am able to return to this fair island again or not you may be sure that my spirit will be always with you and I shall be watching your careers with a great deal of personal interest.

When I decided to visit your country, I had imposed upon myself a strenuous limit that I would not express myself upon your political problems nor do I desire at the present moment to do so. But I know that an important Commission is just now enquiring into your political condition. So far as time has permitted it, I have been endeavouring to follow its proceedings and I may be permitted to hope that its proceedings and its findings may be so wise and so good as to be an unmixed blessing to this one of the fairest spots on the earth.

Without dwelling upon the political questions I may be also permitted to express the hope that even as you have united in offering this welcome to a humble individual like me, you will unite for realizing your political ambition, sink all your differences, think not in water-tight compartments as Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Mussalmans and what not, but think as one people of this great land and realize the highest of your political ambition. Personally, I have never been able to understand why a numerical minority should ever consider that it will not have its claim properly examined and given to it, if it is not separately represented. It has always seemed to me that an attitude of that character betrays want of national consciousness.

I have this morning in addressing my own countrymen given expression to the view which I wish to repeat again that it is the duty of those who have made Ceylon the land of their adoption and where they make more than their livelihood, to subordinate their own interest to the general interest of the indigenous population, the Sinhalese. But I know that I must not go deeper into this subject.

I would like now to devote a sentence or two to the subject of which I have been ceaselessly speaking at all meetings, viz., the question of caste in connection with its concentrated evil, untouchability.

Everybody with whom I have discussed this subject has assured me that there is no warrant whatsoever for caste distinctions, let alone untouchability, in Buddhism, and yet, strange as it may appear, even among the Buddhists of this country you have water-tight compartments, you have superiority and inferiority even bordering on untouchability as in the case of the Rodiyas who, I was glad to be told this morning, were now no more than 600. I know that, if India may take pride in having sent you Mahinda and the message of Buddha to this land, it has also to accept the humiliation of having sent you the curse of caste distinctions. How I wish you could take more and more

of the spirit of the Buddha if it is still to be found in India, and do away with the curse that you have inherited from that great land.

Nor is there the slightest warrant so far as I have been able to study Buddhism and conferred with the leaders of public opinion here, for the drink evil in your midst. It has delighted me to find that you have the right of local option in your midst and that you are taking advantage of that right, but I know from painful experience that this blighting curse is not one to be trifled with nor does it admit of any patience. I would therefore respectfully urge you to hasten the pace and rid this country of this great evil which is sapping the vitality as also the morality of at least the labouring population. I do hope that you are not going to make the mistake of giving favoured treatment to foreign liquors. I have known them to produce the same mischief that indigenous liquors do. So far as I have been able to observe conditions and discuss this question with many medical friends with experience of temperance question, I have no doubt whatsoever that we who live in the temperate zone have no excuse for indulging in this intemperate habit.

I would now devote a sentence or two to the message of the spinning-wheel, in so far as it may be applicable to you. I know, and I am happy to know, that you in this land are strangers to the gnawing pauperism that we have in India and which starves millions of people from day to day. The spinning-wheel therefore has perhaps no economic importance for you but I have no doubt it has a great cultural value for this fair land. Its living message of simplicity is applicable to all lands and you will admit that if your boys and girls and even grown-up men and women devoted an hour every day to self-spinning and if you become self-reliant and self-contained regarding your clothing requirements, it would do not only no harm to you but would add dignity and self-confidence to this nation.

I have been watching not without considerable anxiety the craze for fashion which I see has seized your young men and women belonging to the higher classes. Little do they know how by becoming slaves to this hypnotic dazzle from the West they are isolating themselves from the poor of the country who can never aspire after such fashion. I cannot help thinking that it would be a great national catastrophe, a great tragedy, if you were to barter away your simplicity for this tinsel splendour.

But whether you appreciate this cultural side of the spinning-wheel or not, you have from many a platform voluntarily declared

your allegiance to India by affectionately calling her the Motherland. You have by your generous purses given tangible evidence of that allegiance. May I appeal to you to forge this link stronger and make it a living thing by finding in your wardrobe ample room for khaddar which will be produced as a result of your donations.

I have no power in me to make any the slightest return for the lavish kindness that you have showered upon me, but I have no doubt that the dumb and starving millions on whose behalf you have opened your purses will certainly bless you for the help that you have rendered to them, and as a self-appointed humble representative of those millions I can pray to the Almighty that He may bless you and endow you, the people of this fair island, with all the blessings that you may deserve. I also thank the volunteers and the members of the Reception Committee for all the kindnesses shown to me and my companions during our stay here.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 117-21

214. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, JAFFNA*

November 26, 1927

I am deeply obliged to you for all these addresses and various purses.

I appreciate the spirit with which you have refrained from insisting on reading all your addresses, but the Reception Committee had courteously and consideratiely provided me with copies of all the addresses in advance. I have carefully read all the addresses before coming to this meeting and one of them very correctly remarked that it was the young men of Jaffna who brought me to Ceylon.

In having come to Ceylon and having enjoyed the lavish hospitality of the Ceylonese, I am able to tell you that I have nothing but the pleasantest recollections of my visit to your fair island.

Having come to Jaffna, I do not feel that I am in Ceylon, but I feel that I am in a bit of India. Neither your faces nor your language are foreign to me. Though I cannot identify every one of you by your features I know that I have met many of you in India itself.

So I suppose, that was why you considered that you need not be satisfied with merely extending your lavish hospitality to me

but that you might also exact some work from me. Whilst I was in the south and central parts of Ceylon, I was not overwhelmed with conundrums sent to me by correspondents, as I have been overwhelmed even in Colombo with correspondence from Jaffna presenting me with all kinds of conundrums.

I do not mention this to complain about it, but I mention this in order to tell you that I appreciate the motive that lies behind all this correspondence. It is, I know, a token of your confidence in my ability to assist you in arriving at a solution of some of your problems. It is also a demonstration of the friendship that I enjoy, because it is a special privilege of a friend, not merely to extend his hospitality, but to take his friend into his confidence.

You will, I know, forgive me if I do not straightway present you with a solution of the questions that have been propounded by the correspondents in their letters, but bearing in mind all that correspondence, I propose to imbibe from the atmosphere around me during the four days I am in your midst as much as I can of the inwardness of the many questions that have been presented to me. If I did otherwise, I feel sure that I should be unjust to you and unjust to myself for having arrived at hasty decisions on questions on which I am not sufficiently enlightened.

I congratulate you upon your village communities. I have gone through the paper that was very kindly prepared for my edification on the progress and working of the several village organizations in your midst. I agree with the writers of that note that the successful working of these village organizations is undoubtedly a key to the attainment of final swaraj. Let me tell you from my own experience that a successful village organization does not depend upon good legislation, but it depends upon good men to work it. There will have to be a number of young men and even old men taking a deep and personal interest in their villages just as much as they do in their own families. After all, the truest test of nationalism consists in a person thinking not only of half a dozen men of his own family or of a hundred men of his own clan, but considering as his very own the interest of that group which he calls his nation.

From the book that was sent to me whilst I was in Colombo and the literature that I have since received, I have learnt enough of your activities to know that you have got all the material that will go to make for very successful village organization. You are a small well-built organization, containing people speaking the same language and possessing apparently very well-managed educational institutions. Apparently, you have not yet lost a love

for all that was noble and good in ancient civilization. You have not yet evidently become giddy with the onrush of splendour from the West. It is therefore quite easy for you to become the architects of your own fortune.

It has given me the greatest joy to discover that you are nearly on the point of becoming perfectly dry. Your closing of the pestilential taverns and liquor dens is a great step in the right direction. You deserve the heartiest congratulations of not only the people of this place, not only the people of Ceylon, but of the motherland. It gives me additional joy to have your promise that you are determined to see that in the very near future you will have attained total prohibition, but I have discovered that you have internal difficulties in your way.

A correspondent has sent me a communication enclosing a pamphlet which is evidently designed to counteract the activities of those who are working for total prohibition. That pamphlet, I must confess, is ably written and, on the face of it, seems to claim to my painful surprise the support of some religious divines. In his eagerness to be witty and smart, the author of the pamphlet has not, I am sorry to say, hesitated to wound the susceptibilities of those whose mission he has set about opposing. He does not hesitate to laugh at the very artistic plantain leaf on which rice and curds are beautifully and simply served, nor does he hesitate to laugh at the simple life of those who are satisfied with a mere dhoti to cover themselves and call them half nude. In spite of my attempt to be fair and just to him, I have not been able to discover the slightest connection between the serious subject of prohibition and his light-hearted laugh at the simplicity of his own countrymen, if the author of the pamphlet is an Indian.

But whether you have difficulties internal or external I hope that you will persist in your effort to secure total prohibition.

As I always believe in giving the critics their due and in learning from them what is worth learning, I would like to make two suggestions which have been derived from this pamphlet. The first thing is to avoid the slightest shadow of compulsion or untruth. No reform worth the name has yet been achieved by compulsion, for whilst compulsion may lead to seeming success, it gives rise to so many other evils which are worse than the original evil itself. But I must not be misunderstood. I do not regard legislation declaring total prohibition as in any shape or form compulsion. When there is honestly and clearly expressed public opinion in favour of total prohibition, it is not only the right of the people but it is the sacred duty of the people to declare

total prohibition by legislation and take all effective steps to enforce that legislation.

Of instances of untruth cited by the author of this pamphlet are examples, as he suggests, of people taking part in prohibition meetings, themselves being given to the drink habit. If there are any such hypocritical people who are working this prohibition campaign, I have no doubt that the movement is doomed to fail. In a cause so eminently just, noble and humane I hope that you will take special precautions to rid yourselves of hypocrites.

The second suggestion which I shall place before you is that having obtained legislation you may not, you dare not sit still.

The writer of that pamphlet insinuates that prohibition in America has been a failure. I happen to know better from Americans themselves. Difficult, almost impossible, as prohibition for a big country like America may appear to us, it is not a failure, but it is gradually succeeding. Compared to the difficulties that the brave reformers in America have to face, you have absolutely no difficulty to face in this land, but I would like you to take a leaf out of the book of those great reformers. They are not only not sleeping over the legislation which they have obtained after an incessant struggle stretching over a long period, but they are doing great, gigantic constructive work. For, when the drink evil takes possession of a man, it is the most difficult thing to wean him. Americans are therefore devising all kinds of means to deal with this class of people.

With the drunkard, the drink craze is a disease, and you will have to take him in hand, as you will an ailing brother or sister of yours who may be diseased. In the place of taverns you will have to give them refreshment rooms, and all kinds of innocent recreations in order to keep the drunkards busy at something in which they may be interested. If you, who have got all the facilities for achieving this reform, are entirely successful, you will set a noble example to all India.

Lastly, you will not be impatient or angry with the opponent who may be working against you. I do not know whether the same condition prevails in Jaffna as it prevails in India and other parts of the world, but I do know that in India, in England, in America, the anti-prohibitionists have not only on their side able unprincipled writers to help them but they have also brewers' money.

But if you will follow the prescription that I have ventured to place before our own country which you call the mother country, viz., of truth and non-violence, you will disarm all these clever writers in spite of the money at their back.

Now, I come to the depressed or rather the suppressed classes. I was delighted to receive two addresses from them. I must confess to you that I was not prepared to find this evil existing in your midst to any extent at all. I had thought that you left this evil in the mother country and that in this island you had turned over a new leaf. Living in a country over which the spirit of the Buddha is brooding, I had felt you would be free from this taint of untouchability. After all Gautama was a Hindu. He was no more than one of the greatest among Hindu reformers. Let no Hindu then be ashamed of learning from him the secret of human love. Let us realize that it is a sin to consider a single human being as inferior to ourselves or untouchable. If you believe in an all-wise and all-loving God, as you must believe, you will immediately fling the doors of your temples open to receive the suppressed brethren.

To the suppressed brethren I would like to say one thing. I do not know how you stand over the drink question. I know that many of the suppressed brethren in India are given to the drink habit. If there are any amongst you who are given to it I hope you will give it up and if there are any who are given to eating carrion or beef, they would in order to be true to the Hindu faith give these up.

I have copious correspondence before me about a little storm in a tea cup, as I call the differences that have arisen between Christians and Hindus. This correspondence has given me a painful shock. I have not yet been able to understand the cause of these differences. I therefore do not propose to say much upon them. I would like to be told before I leave Jaffna that you have yourselves settled all your differences. Surely, you are after all numerically a small enough community to be able to handle these little differences in a satisfactory manner. So far as I have been able to understand from the correspondence, there is really very little reason even for a split between the two, but I shall hope to have to say more on a future occasion on this point. I can only here say that I invite everybody who is interested in this question to write to me freely, briefly and intelligently. It will give me very great pleasure and joy to be of any service to you in this matter.

Lastly, since you have been so generous in giving me your purses, and I know that many more purses are still to come, I beseech you to continue your love for the motherland and your sympathy for the starving millions of India by finding a place in your wardrobe for khadi. It will be a living bond between yourselves and the famishing millions. I know that our women

are the greatest offenders in this respect, and I individually appeal to them to moderate their taste for fine and silken saris and be satisfied with what their famishing sisters can produce for them. Then and then only will they be somewhat representative of Sita whose sacred feet hallowed this land as the legend has it. I give them my assurance that they will not look any the less handsome, because of their khadi sari. I would like to give them a warning too that I expect a lot of jewellery from them before I have left these shores.

I must not forget one thing. You have overloaded me with heavy things. I thought that you who claim close kinship and intimacy with me knew that if you gave me heavily framed addresses, they would be returned to you and you would be made to pay for them. You have not only spent upon heavy frames, but you have had your addresses illuminated. Unless you had all these things done with a mental reservation that you will be called upon to pay high price for these addresses, you have deprived the famishing sisters of so many rupees.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 121-8

215. SPEECH TO STUDENTS' CONGRESS, JAFFNA

November 26, 1927

I thank you for the beautiful address that you have presented to me this evening. You have taken upon yourselves, and very rightly, the credit of bringing me to this fair island, but you must remember also that those who take credit for anything have also to take discredit if any mishap occurs.

It is very difficult for me this evening to give you a message for the simple reason that I do not know your Congress sufficiently, nor do I know sufficiently the composition of my audience but your worthy Chairman has informed me of the objects of your Congress. I shall try to give you some thoughts that occur to me on some of those objects.

If I understand him rightly, your first object is to revive ancient culture. You have then to understand what that ancient culture is and it must be necessarily culture which all students, whether they are Hindus, Christians, Buddhists or to whatever faith they belong, would be interested in reviving, because I take it that by ancient culture you do not want to confine yourselves purely to Hindu students. I take it that this Students' Congress

includes all students, Hindus, Christians, Muslims and Buddhists. Though today it has on its rolls no Muslim student or Buddhist student, it does not much matter for my argument for the simple reason that your ultimate object is attainment of swaraj, not merely for the Hindus and Christians of Jaffna, but for all the inhabitants of this island of which Jaffna is but a part. What I have said with reference to the inclusion of students belonging to these religions must hold good. That being so, we hark back to the question, what ancient culture it is we want to revive. It must, therefore, be such as to be common to all these elements and such as to be acceptable to all these elements. Therefore, whilst that culture will undoubtedly be predominantly Hindu culture, it can never be exclusively Hindu. The reason why I say that it must be predominantly Hindu is because you who are seeking to revive ancient culture are predominantly Hindu, and are all the while thinking of that country which you rightly and proudly delight to call your motherland.

In Hindu culture, I venture to submit, Buddhistic culture is necessarily included for the simple reason that Buddha himself was an Indian, not only an Indian, but a Hindu amongst Hindus. I have never seen anything in the life of Gautama to warrant the belief that he renounced Hinduism and adopted a new faith. My task becomes easy when I consider also that Jesus himself was an Asiatic, and therefore it becomes a question really to consider what Asiatic or ancient Asiatic culture is. For that matter then, Mohammed was also an Asiatic. Since you can only wish to revive all that is noble, all that is permanent in ancient culture or revival, you cannot revive anything antagonistic to any of these faiths. The question then amounts to this, to find out the common factor, the greatest common measure, belonging to all these great faiths, and thus you will come, according to my own estimate of things noble, to this very simple factor, viz., that you want to be truthful and non-violent, for truth and non-violence are common to all these great faiths. You cannot possibly seek to revive many of the customs that you and I might have even forgotten, that may have at one time formed part of Hinduism. I recall one great thought that the late Justice Ranade expressed when he was speaking of ancient culture. He told his audience that it would be difficult for any single person in the audience to say exactly what ancient culture was and when that culture ceased to be ancient and began to be modern. He also said that a prudent man would not swear by anything because it was ancient, but he told the audience that any culture ancient or modern, must be submitted to the

test of reason and experience. I am obliged to utter this warning to this Congress of students who are to be makers of the destinies of this land because of so many reactionary forces gathering round us not only here, but throughout the world. I see from my own experience in India that many who are professing to revive ancient culture do not hesitate under the name of that revival to revive old superstitions and prejudices.

After apologizing for his low voice and the necessity for reproducing or translating his speech, Mahatmaji continued:

I was describing to you from my own experience some of the reactionary forces that had been set in motion in the motherland itself. Ancient tradition and ancient laws have been dragged almost out of the tomb to justify the hideous doctrine of untouchability. A similar attempt, some of you may know, is now being made to justify the institution of *Devadasis*.

You will not, therefore, consider that I have given you an elaborate statement in warning you against being misled into wrongdoing under the name of revival of ancient culture. Perhaps, you will understand the significance of this warning coming as it does from a man who is himself not only a lover of ancient culture but has been endeavouring in his own life, to the best of his ability, to reproduce all that is noble, that is permanent in ancient culture. In trying to explore the hidden treasures of ancient culture, I have come upon this inestimable boon that all that is permanent in ancient Hindu culture is also to be found in the teachings of Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed and Zoroaster. So I have come to this workable arrangement for myself—if I find anything in Hinduism wherein the ancients agreed that is repugnant to my Christian brother or my Mussalman brother, I immediately begin to fidget and doubt the ancientness of that claim. So I came by a process of examination to this irresistible conclusion that there was nothing so very ancient in this world as these two good old things—truth and non-violence—and arguing along these lines of truth and non-violence, I also discovered that I must not attempt to revive ancient practices if they were inconsistent with, call it if you will, modern life as it must be lived. Ancient practices may have been perfectly good and perhaps absolutely necessary at the time when those practices were adopted but they might be entirely out of date with modern needs and still not be contrary to truth or non-violence. Then you can see how safe the road becomes in front of you and me when we summarily and mercilessly reject untouchability, the *Devadasi* institution, drunkenness, sacri-

fice of animals in the very name of God whom we call Compassionate, All-merciful, Forgiving. We can unhesitatingly and summarily reject all these things, because they do not appeal to our moral sense. So much with reference to the negative side of it, but there is a positive side to it which is just as important as the negative.

In putting before you the positive side let me draw for you one very necessary corollary to the doctrine of non-violence. I put it before my very dear friends, the reformers, a very small body of staunch workers in Chettinad. The corollary or deduction is this. If we accept non-violence, we must then not wish for anything on this earth which the meanest or the lowest of human beings cannot have. If that is a sound proposition, and I claim that it is a direct corollary from the doctrine of non-violence, if you accept it and then if it is a sound proposition it follows that we may not barter away our ancient simplicity for anything on this earth. Now, you will perhaps understand my determined opposition to the modern rush, the hypnotic dazzle that seems almost to overcome us and overtake us and that is coming to us with such violent force, and the West. I have taken great pains in my writings as also in my speeches to distinguish between the modern methods adopted in the West, the multiplicity of wants and material comforts, and the essential teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. So, in the opening sentences of my speech I threw out the hint of what was to come when I told you that after all Jesus was an Asiatic, Mohammed was an Asiatic, to draw that sharp distinction between the preaching and message of Jesus and what is today going on in America, in England and other parts of the world. I have been able to live at least with thousands upon thousands of my Christian friends in South Africa and now, because the circle is growing ever larger throughout the world, so you Hindus and a handful of Buddhists here, if there is even a handful of Buddhists, well, if you will be true to your ancient culture, refuse to have anything whatsoever to do with this hypnotic dazzle even though it may come to you in the so-called Christian garb. If you have an immovable faith in yourselves, if you will also cultivate it inexhaustibly, you will find that the Christian friends, even though they come to you with the Western dazzle behind them, will shed all that dazzle and be converted to the doctrine of simplicity which alone can satisfy the test of the corollary that I have ventured to draw before this audience.

If you have closely followed my reason, you will at once understand the message, the imperishable message of the spinning-

wheel. It is because I see in the spinning-wheel the hand of God working; it is because I see in the spinning-wheel the satisfaction of the needs of the meanest of human beings, that in season and out of season I think about it, work at it, pray about it and speak about it. If there is any other thing which can bring you nearer to the famishing people of the earth, that could put you at once on the level of the scavenger, I withdraw the spinning-wheel and hug the other thing. You will perhaps also understand that I go about from door to door shamelessly and ceaselessly with the begging bowl and beg everyone to put something into it if they will do so with a willing heart. I have now overstayed my time. I must not exhaust your patience and I must now therefore leave you to dot the 'i's and cross the 't's of this speech. I have to talk to the student world several other things, because I have the honour to enjoy their confidence, but tonight I must not go any further with my remarks.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you have done and are doing and if you will act in accordance with the paper that some of you sent me, when I was in Colombo, you will certainly have done a brave thing. There was one thing in that paper which I would have liked to correct, but I must seek some other occasion to do so. I thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me.

The Hindu, 1-12-1927 and *With Gandhiji in Ceylon*

216. LETTER TO HARJIVAN KOTAK

JAFFNA,
November 27, 1927

Who are the persons for whom *brahmacharya* has proved to be a hard vow? I hope you yourself have not taken fright. Wake up and be on your guard. The whole world may perish, but a vow once taken ought not to be given up. Your idea of undertaking a fast is a good one. Try and see what peace you get through it. I hope you do not think about Sharada. Fix your thoughts exclusively on khadi. You will not find anywhere in the world a woman like khadi; countless men may be wedded to her and yet she always remains a virgin. And a man who takes her alone as wife will still be an inviolate *brahmachari*. If you cultivate single-minded devotion to her, how can you get time to think of other things?

Why should you dwell in your mind on things which are not for you in this life? When a few persons like you and me keep

firm in their vows, it is only then that we and the world can be saved from this conflagration.

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

217. A LETTER

November 27, 1927

None of us can say how M's desire for sex-pleasure may die out. I know of course that it is not your duty to bring that about. It is not the duty of husband or wife to see that the partner's passion dies out. The result should come through the free will of both. The world goes on, since all of us are sunk in passion. It is everyone's duty to control it. While striving to do so, some persons of extraordinary strength are fortunate enough to cross to the other shore.

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

218. DISCUSSION WITH CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES, JAFFNA[1]

November 27, 1927

Rev. W. A. Kathirgamer asked what would be the religious future of India and the share that Christianity would take in it and what Gandhiji wished it to be.

Mahatmaji replied that the first question was beyond his capacity to answer. The second question he could. For years past his wish had been that all religions should flourish in India in their true light, because he did not consider any one religion to be exclusively true. That being his position and having a tolerant nature all through his life, he had no like or dislike. He endorsed the appeal made by the Dewan of Mysore to missionaries and Mussalmans who believed in conversion to make the untouchables better Hindus. He thought that if all men belonging to the different great faiths became better by contact with one another the world would be a much better place to live in. So long as there were different points of view they would have large classifications such as Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism and in all of

[1] At the Missionary Conference

these religions no two persons thought alike. If, however, they examined the religion of . . . the respective parties from their own standpoints all should agree quickly. He did not expect the India of his dream to develop one religion only, but expected it to be respectful to all faiths working side by side without exciting the slightest suspicion or jealousy which he noticed even in Jaffna.

Rev. J. Bicknell asked: "You have been working towards Hindu-Muslim unity in India. Is there any likelihood of unity among them?"

MAHATMAJI: O yes. Most decidedly.

REV. BICKNELL: The one is a cow-worshipper and the other is a cow-eater; the one is an idol-worshipper and the other is an idol-breaker?

Mahatma Gandhi admitted that there were differences on the surface and as he was a bit of a cook he knew what happened when he took dirty salt and a bit of dirty sugar. Put them in the melting pot and add a little water. All the dirt would come up to the surface; and if he were an unskilled cook he would come to the conclusion that it was all dirt and therefore in his impatience he would throw it away; but being fairly a skilled cook he knew that the dirt should be easily removed from the surface and that pure crystals of salt and sugar could be separated. So it was with Hindus and Mussalmans. Today they were fighting like dogs, he might say, but they were fighting only to come together and they were fighting really not because one was an idol-worshipper and the other an idol-breaker, because the one was cow-eater and the other was a cow-worshipper; but it was the mutual fear which was working upon them and mutual distrust which was always the first-born of fear. That was what was happening today and unfortunately both the communities were ill-advised and both had forgotten the fundamental precepts of their respective faiths. The Hindu had undoubtedly forgotten the principle of ahimsa, although he was never tired of saying "*ahimsa paramo dharmah*". The Mussalmans seemed to think that in Islam there was ample room for violence as there was for non-violence, but when he cross-questioned his Mussalman friends they had stated that non-violence was always the law, but if they could not be non-violent, then it was permissible to be violent. In any case therefore non-violence was really common between the two. It was not Islam and Hinduism that were fighting, but it was the hooligans belonging to each faith. So when the hooligans were exhausted they would settle down, or if that did not happen, as a man of faith which could not be easily assailed, he was convinced that the good Hindus and the good Mussalmans, who were in the background, were of intensely prayerful nature and that their prayers would be heard and the hooligans would ultimately be confounded.

Q. Your work in South Africa interested me immensely and I rejoiced in the work that you did in South Africa. Are you satisfied so far with the result in South Africa?

MAHATMAJI: I was going to say "very much", but perhaps that will be too much to say; but very fairly satisfied. At the present moment things are looking pretty. The Rt. Hon. Sastri is doing very great work indeed.

To a question as to how the New Testament and the *Bhagavad Gita* were sources of inspiration and comfort to him, Mahatmaji said that he had derived very great consolation and comfort from the New Testament—from the Sermon on the Mount, because that was exactly working in his mind. He studied the *Gita* later and he had not been able to see any difference between the Sermon on the Mount and the *Bhagavad Gita*. What the Sermon on the Mount had done in a graphic manner, the *Bhagavad Gita* had reduced to scientific formula. It was in one way a scientific book, in another way it was not a scientific book because there was no scientific treatment but the *Bhagavad Gita* had deduced the Law of Abandon, or as he would call it the Law of Exclusive Love, not in the sense of love for some and not for others, but exclusive of all hate which he found argued out in the *Bhagavad Gita*. He gave the history of how he read the Old Testament and then with great joy read the New Testament and how he came to the *Bhagavad Gita* so that they could draw their own conclusions as to the source of his inspiration.

The Ceylon Daily News, 1-12-1927

219. *SPEECH AT INDIANS' MEETING, JAFFNA*

November 27, 1927

Ever since I have come to Lanka the conviction has been growing upon me that I am not in Lanka but in India glorified. A glorified edition of India Lanka certainly is from a scenic point of view. Though I was prepared for the scenery in Lanka, the scenery I have actually witnessed has surpassed all my expectations and so I could not help saying at a recent meeting that Ceylon seemed to be a fragrant, beautiful pearl dropped from the nasal ring of India. If the people of Lanka are really, as they should be, inheritors of this culture of India, they also should represent in their lives a glorious edition of mother India.

After all, was not Gautama Buddha one of the greatest of Hindu reformers? And why should not the people of Lanka who have inherited and adopted the teachings of the great Master do better than the children of the motherland? Alas! today the source from which the strength of Lanka was derived in the days of yore seems almost to have dried up. We of India seem at the present moment to have fallen on evil days. We are ourselves

struggling for our very existence, so much so that according to English historians at least one-tenth of the population of India is living in a state of perpetual starvation.

It is in order to remove the sting of this growing, grinding pauperism that I have been ceaselessly wandering from place to place, exciting the sympathy of moneyed people on behalf of these men and women who do not know what a full meal can be. And it has been a matter of the greatest consolation, indeed, a sense that sustains me in spite of darkness surrounding us on all sides, that wherever I go I receive a ready response from our countrymen.

It causes me, therefore, no surprise that you have brought me here to meet you and given me your tangible sympathy. But you do not need to be told by me that the sympathy that you have given me in the shape of money is by no means enough. I can only take it as a token of your desire to render still more help, and therefore I must repeat for the thousandth time what I have been saying to every audience, that you will not have done your elementary duty by these famishing brothers and sisters of ours unless you follow up your donations by a fixed determination never more to make your cloth purchases in anything but khadi.

And the sisters who are also to be found in this hall must really help and respond to the dumb appeal of the famishing millions. Neither they nor the men may contemptuously tell me that khadi is too dear, that khadi is not fine enough, that it does not satisfy their taste. I have not yet heard a single mother to complain of the want of beauty of her children nor have I ever heard a mother complain that her children were a burden upon her purse. If you really feel for these famishing millions, if you really believe that they are famishing and that they are your own blood-brothers and blood-sisters, how can you complain of the price or quality of khadi? What right have you to think of fashion or of prices when you find that there are millions of people hungry for food and can be fed by you if only you will wear khadi which is manufactured by their sacred but shaking hands?

Will you not take a leaf out of the book of Englishmen and Germans who taxed themselves, suffered untold privations and suffered all kinds of difficulties, including death, under circumstances too terrible to relate, and all for what they believed to be the honour of their country? How much more then should you deprive yourselves of your manufactured tastes and notions about fashionable dress and pay a little higher price for khadi when it is not merely the honour of your sisters which is at stake but when it is their very existence which is in danger.

I wish therefore that it was possible for you to besiege Sjt. Rajagopalachari with your orders for khadi and even for fine embroidered saris if you must have fashionable saris. But I must pass on to another subject.

Whenever I have gone to countries outside India and even to the different provinces in India, I have advised the people from other parts who have settled in those regions to subordinate their interests to the interests of the land to which they have migrated. Whether you are Hindus or Mussalmans or Parsis, no matter to which province you belong, I feel it to be your bounden duty to live amongst the people of the land where you go, not as thorns in their sides, but like sugar in milk. You must be in the midst of such people as trustees of your own culture, and you should make common cause with those people alike in their joys as well as their sorrows.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 134-6

220. SPEECH TO CEYLON HINDUS, JAFFNA

November 27, 1927

This is the last of a series of many meetings, whose number even I cannot now remember, that I have been addressing today.[1] Precious as all of them have been, this to me is the most precious, because you have conceived a meeting of Hindus specially to be addressed by me. This I take to mean that I must speak to you Hindus as a Hindu. And it gives me the greatest pleasure to have been invited to do so. As you know, though my claim has not been accepted by those who call themselves orthodox Hindus I persist in calling myself an orthodox Hindu. But by making that claim I, a votary of Truth, must not mislead you in any way whatsoever. If orthodox Hinduism consists in dining or not dining with this man or that man, and touching this man and not touching that man, or in quarrelling with Mussalmans and Christians, then I am certainly not an orthodox Hindu. But if orthodox Hinduism can mean an incessant search after what Hinduism possibly can be, if orthodox Hinduism can mean an incessant striving to live Hinduism to the best of one's lights, then I do claim to be an orthodox Hindu. I am also an orthodox Hindu in the sense in which the author of the *Mahabharata*, the

[1] Gandhiji had addressed nine gatherings before this meeting.

great Vyasa, would have it. He has said somewhere in the *Mahabharata* to this effect: Put Truth in one scale and all sacrifices whatever in the other; that scale which contains Truth will outweigh the one that contains all the sacrifices put together, not excluding *rajasuya*[1] and *ashvamedha yajna*[2]. And if the *Mahabharata* may be accepted as the fifth Veda, then I can claim to be an orthodox Hindu, because every moment of the twenty-four hours of my life I am endeavouring to follow truth counting no cost as too great.

Having thus registered my claim in the presence of this audience, I now wish to tell you as an orthodox Hindu what in my humble opinion your duty is in Jaffna, and in Ceylon. First of all I want to speak to you about your duty towards the predominant population in this island. And I wish to suggest to you that they are your co-religionists. They will, if they choose to, repudiate the claim. For they will say that Buddhism is not Hinduism and they will be partly right. Many Hindus certainly repudiate the claim of Buddhism to be part and parcel of Hinduism. On the contrary, they delight in saying that they successfully drove Buddhism out of India. But I tell you that they did nothing of the kind. Buddha himself was a Hindu. He endeavoured to reform Hinduism. And he succeeded in his attempt to a very great extent and what Hinduism did at that time was to assimilate and absorb all that was good and best in the teachings of the Buddha. And on that account I ventured to say that Hinduism became broadened, and having assimilated the best of Buddhism, it is true that Hinduism drove out from India what might be termed the excrescences that had gathered round the teachings of Gautama. And the way in which you can demonstrate this to the Buddhists of Ceylon is by living the broadened Hinduism in their midst. The one thing that the Buddha showed India was that God was not a God who can be appeased by sacrificing innocent animals. On the contrary, he held that those who sacrificed animals in the hope of pleasing God were guilty of a double sin. So if you will be true to Hinduism, you will take care that you will not defile a single temple of yours by indulging in animal sacrifice. I am prepared to declare against the whole of Hindu India that it is wrong, sinful and criminal to sacrifice a single

[1] A great sacrifice performed by an emperor (in which the tributory princes also took part) at the time of his coronation as a mark of his undisputed sovereignty

[2] A sacrifice in which the wanderings of a sacrificial horse established the extent of the jurisdiction of a conquering king

animal for the purpose of gaining any end whatsoever, or for the purpose of propitiating God.

The second thing that Gautama taught was that all that caste means today—as it meant in his time also—was wholly wrong. That is to say, he abolished every distinction of superiority and inferiority that was even in his time eating into the vitals of Hinduism. But he did not abolish varnashrama dharma. *Varna* dharma is not caste. As I have said in so many speeches in South India, and as I have written fairly exhaustively on *varna* dharma in *Young India*, I hold that there is nothing in common between caste and *varna*. Whilst *varna* gives life, caste kills it, and untouchability is the most hateful expression of caste. You will therefore banish untouchability from your midst. I make bold to say that there is no warrant whatsoever in Hinduism for untouchability as it is practised today. If therefore you want to live your Hinduism in its purity in the midst of Buddhist countrymen, you will take care that you will not consider a single human being as an untouchable. Unfortunately the Buddhists in Ceylon have themselves borrowed this curse from Hindus. They should never have had this institution of caste in their midst. For heaven's sake forget that some are high but others are low; remember that you are all Hindus —brothers in arms.

I have a letter from a Jaffna Hindu telling me that there are some temples in this place where you have dances by women of ill fame on certain occasions. If that information is correct, then let me tell you that you are converting temples of God into dens of prostitution. A temple, to be a house of worship, to be a temple of God, has got to conform to certain well-defined limitations. A prostitute has as much right to go to a house of worship as a saint. But she exercises that right when she enters the temple to purify herself. But when the trustees of a temple admit a prostitute under cover of religion or under cover of embellishing the worship of God, then they convert a house of God into one of prostitution. And if anybody no matter how high he may be comes to you and seeks to justify the admission of women of ill fame into your temples for dancing or any such purpose, reject him and agree to the proposal that I have made to you. If you want to be good Hindus, if you want to worship God, and if you are wise, you will fling the doors of all your temples open to the so-called untouchables. God makes no distinction between His worshippers. He accepts the worship of these untouchables just as well and as much as that of the so-called touchables, provided it comes from the bottom of the heart.

There are still certain things that demand your attention. You have to live at the present moment in a world which has Christians and Mussalmans, great communities owning great faiths. In Jaffna you have a very small Mussalman population, hardly two or three per cent. The Christian population is ten per cent. But you have to live your life in the midst of these, whether they are two per cent or twenty per cent. And if I know Hinduism aright, Hinduism is nothing if it is not tolerant and generous to every other faith. And since they are also as much inhabitants of this peninsula and this island as you, it is your duty to regard them as your brothers. Unless you do so, you will never evolve the truly national spirit that is necessary, and therefore you will not evolve the necessary Hindu and the humanitarian spirit. You have a right to control the education of your own children, and I am glad that you have got your own board of education. I would like you to strengthen that board in the right spirit as much as you can, but that should mean no jar whatsoever with the rival institutions of the Christian missionaries. If you have got an ably-manned staff of educationists and provide the necessary facilities for the Hindu children, naturally all the Hindu children will come to your institutions. And I can see no reason whatsoever for mutual jealousies in the matter of education as I understand there is somewhat. I was delighted to find that only up to recent time, Hindus, Christians, and Mussalmans were living in absolute friendship. A jar has been created only recently as between the Christians and yourselves. And seeing that you are in a vast majority, it is up to you to make advances and settle all your disputes. And if you will get rid of the wretched caste spirit which has crept into Hinduism, you will find that all the difficulties will disappear.

And remember that since you are in a vast majority, the responsibility rests on your shoulders to make Jaffna, and through Jaffna Ceylon also perfectly dry. Hinduism does not permit you to drink. And if the board of education will do its duty, you will encourage Sanskrit study in your schools. I regard the education of any Hindu child as incomplete unless he has some knowledge of Sanskrit. And so far as I have been able to see we have in Hinduism no book so compact and so acceptable all round as the *Bhagavad Gita*. If you will, therefore, saturate your children and yourselves with the spirit of Hinduism, you will endeavour to understand the spirit of the teachings of the *Gita*. You should also cultivate a common knowledge of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*.

Lastly, I know no solution of the many difficulties that face the whole of the human family except the two things that I am saying everywhere. Speak the truth and remain non-violent also at any cost. I know as certainly as I know that I am sitting in front of you and speaking to you, that if I could but persuade you to understand the spirit of these two things and act up to them, every one of our difficulties will disappear like straws before wind, and God will descend from His Great White Throne and live in your midst and He will say, 'You Hindus have done well'.

Young India, 15-12-1927

221. *TELEGRAM TO MIRABEHN*

JAFFNA,
[*November*] *28* [*1927*][1]

TO
MIRABAI
ASHRAM
SABARMATI

HAS DOCTOR OPENED WOUND? BERHAMPUR OR NEIGHBOURHOOD TILL SIXTH. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5295. Courtesy: Mirabehn

222. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

November 28, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

What could be so bad with your foot? But all these visitations are part of the suffering and discipline. I have replied to your two wires.[2] You will not take any hasty step. If the foot requires doctoring, it would be better not to leave the Ashram. For I think I told you that there would be some touring in Orissa also. I shall not be allowed to rest in one place. But you will do what gives you most peace. If you cannot be happy, being there, you will come whether you are limping or well. And

[1] Gandhiji was in Jaffna on this date.
[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

if you can restrain yourself, we meet in January in any case. But I am not going to interfere with your wishes. You will just do as the spirit moves you.

The change you describe in your dress does not appear to be anything furious.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5297. Courtesy: Mirabehn

223. *LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI*

JAFFNA,
November 28, 1927

MY DEAR BHRRR[1],

Have read the story of Shireen and Farhad? Have you ever known lovers tired of hearing from or about the loved ones? Now do you wonder why I was thirsting for your letter? Similar is the story of how I discovered Raihana.

Now love.

Yours,
BHRRR

From a photostat: S.N. 9560

224. *LETTER TO SURENDRA*

November 28, 1927

Devdas's state is extremely pitiable. Rajaji is not likely at all to let him marry Lakshmi, and rightly so. Lakshmi will not take one step without his consent. She is happy and cheerful, whereas Devdas has gone mad after her and is pining for her and suffering. If he had such love for God, he would have been revered as a saintly man and become a great dedicated worker.

But how can even Devdas act against his nature? He wishes to obey me, but his soul rebels against him. He seems to believe that I stand in the way of his marriage with Lakshmi and so feels angry with me. I do not know at present how he can be brought

[1] This was a form of greetings used by Gandhiji and the addressee for each other.

out of this condition. Try and see if you can help him recover peace of mind and explain to him his dharma. It is possible that I have not understood him and am, therefore, doing him injustice. See if you can give him peace of mind through a letter. I of course write to him frequently.

Personally, I clearly see that the impure desires in his mind are the cause of his many diseases. Such desires secretly eat away a person from within. I have no doubt about this. Devdas is right in believing that he is pleasure-loving, but pleasure-loving is rather a mild word. His thoughts run after sex-pleasure. Since he cannot see this clearly, it consumes him secretly.

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

225. *LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN*

JAFFNA,
November 28, 1927

SISTERS,

This region is also part of Ceylon, but it is very different from South Ceylon. The people inhabiting this part are Tamils from India, and they observe Indian manners and customs. This part, therefore, does not look very different from South India. It is true that women here appear to live a little more freely than in South India.

There is a Gujarati couple here. The lady (Kashibai) belongs to a good family from Rajkot, and her husband is the son of the well-known Haragovinddas Kantawalla of Baroda. He is a Judge here. They are highly respected. Half the number of my meals come from Kashibai. So Ba may be said to be on a holiday.

We are leaving this place tomorrow. We are now going to a land of human skeletons, and I am anxious to see them in order to rouse my heart and to discover a still deeper meaning of the spinning-wheel.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3678

226. LETTER TO T. B. KESHAVA RAO

November 29, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I am quite sure that everybody has the right to study and understand the *Gita*. I hope to deal with your letter[1] in the pages of *Young India* when I get the time.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 159

227. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR

Margashirsha Shukla 5 [November 29, 1927][2]

BHAI RAMESHWARDAS,

Your letter. I shall begin the return voyage tomorrow. Peace will certainly come to you by sincerely reciting Ramanama.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 189

228. SPEECH AT ST. JOHN COLLEGE, JAFFNA

November 29, 1927

If you had been looking forward to meeting me under this roof, I can say that I was no less looking forward to meeting you. Though I receive, and receive with thankfulness, money from millionaires, it is a source of much greater pleasure to me to receive small gifts, no matter how small they may be, from boys and girls who are still making their lives. It gives me greater pleasure for two reasons. One is, the gift that springs from innocent boys and girls fructifies much more than gifts of those who

[1] Presumably Gandhiji discussed it in "Distortion of Truth", 8-12-1927.

[2] Gandhiji started on his return voyage from Ceylon on November 30, 1927; the source bears a Ceylon postal stamp.

may be considered worldly-wise men. The second reason is that gifts such as yours give me a keener sense of responsibility than perhaps I should otherwise have. . . .[1]

I have not the power to make any return for your kindness and your generosity. I can only pray to God that He may bless you for all the good things that you may do in life. I know that mere mental training is nothing if it is not accompanied by a true training of the heart. And may your hearts extend in the manner that your minds may. I thank you once more.

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

229. SPEECH AT CENTRAL COLLEGE, JAFFNA

November 29, 1927

I am deeply grateful to you for the generous purse that you have given me on behalf of the semi-starving millions of India. You, Sir, sent me due notice yesterday of the very important question that you have repeated this morning.[2] I have many engagements between now and 10.30; therefore, and also for other reasons into which I do not want to enter, I would fain have avoided this question. But on the principle that has guided my life that I must take things as they come to me, unless I find it utterly impossible for me to cope with them, I propose to devote the very few minutes that I have at my disposal to answer that question.

I say in one sentence that for many many years I have regarded Jesus of Nazareth as one amongst the mighty teachers that the world has had, and I say this in all humility. I claim humility for this expression for the simple reason that this is exactly what I feel. Of course, Christians claim a higher place for Jesus of Nazareth than as a non-Christian and as a Hindu I have been able to feel. I purposely use the word 'feel' instead of 'give', because I consider that neither I, nor anybody else can possibly arrogate to himself the claim of giving place to a great man. The great teachers of mankind have had the place not given to them, but the place has belonged to them as a matter of right, as a matter of service that they have rendered, but it is given to the

[1] Gandhiji then dwelt on khadi and untouchability.

[2] The Principal of the College had asked Gandhiji what place he would give to Christ among the great world teachers not as a divine instructor, but as a man and a teacher.

lowest and the humblest amongst us to feel certain things about certain people. The relation between great teachers and ourselves is somewhat after the style of relation between a husband and wife. It would be a most terrible thing, a tragic thing, if I was to argue out intellectually for myself what place I was to give to my wife in my heart. It is not in my giving, but she takes the place that belongs to her as a matter of right in my heart. It is a matter purely for feeling. Then I can say that Jesus occupies in my heart the place of one of the great teachers who has had considerable part in finding that place in my heart. Leave the Christians alone for the present. I shall say to the 75 per cent Hindus receiving instruction in this College that your lives will be incomplete unless you reverently study the teaching of Jesus. I have come to the conclusion, in my own experience, that those who, no matter to what faith they belong, reverently study the teaching of other faiths broaden their own, instead of slackening their hearts. Personally, I do not regard any of the great religions of the world as false. All have served in embellishing mankind and are even now serving their purpose. A liberal education to all should include, as I have put it, a reverent study of other faiths, but I do not want to labour this point, nor have I the time to do so.

There is one thing which, as I am speaking to you, occurs to me, which comes to me from my early studies of the Bible. It seized me immediately I read the passage:

> But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.[1]

I tell you that if you will understand, appreciate and act up to the spirit of this passage, you won't even need to know what place Jesus or any other teacher occupies in your heart. If you will do the proper scavenger's work, clean and purify your hearts and get them ready, you will find that all these mighty teachers will take their places without invitation from us. That, to my mind, is the basis of all sound education. Culture of the mind must be subservient to the culture of the heart. May God help you to become pure!

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

[1] *St. Mathew*, vi. 33

230. SPEECH AT UNDUVIL GIRLS' COLLEGE, JAFFNA

November 29, 1927

It has given me very great pleasure indeed to meet you this morning. I do not at all appreciate the idea of your little gifts coming right from the bottom of your hearts having been merged in the general purse, but I am going to put the best construction possible upon the fact of your purse having been merged in the general purse that you, being more modest than boys, do not want me to know that you had given anything at all, but having met thousands or tens of thousands of girls all through India, it is difficult for girls nowadays to hide from me any good things that they do. Now, there are some girls who do not mind even telling me the bad things that they do. Let me hope that of all these girls before me, there is not one single girl who does a bad thing. Not having the time to cross-examine you, I am not going to weary you with questions, but if there are any girls in our midst who do bad things, let them know that their education is useless if they do bad things.

Your parents do not send you to school to become dolls; on the contrary, you are expected to become Sisters of Mercy. Do not make the mistake of thinking that only those may be called Sisters of Mercy who wear a particular dress in hospitals. When she becomes a Sister of Mercy, immediately she thinks less of herself and more of those who are poorer and more unfortunate than herself, and you have done the work of Sisters of Mercy in giving your mite to the purse that has been presented to me, because that purse has been presented for those who are unfortunately poorer than yourselves. Giving a little bit of money is easy enough; to do a little thing oneself is more difficult. If you really feel for the people for whom you give money, you must go a step further and wear khadi that these people manufacture. When khadi is brought before you and if you adore it, and say: 'Khadi is a bit coarse, we cannot wear it,' then I know you have not the spirit of self-sacrifice in you.

It is such a very nice thing that here there is no distinction between high class and low class, touchables and untouchables and if your hearts are also working in that direction, and you do not consider yourselves superior to some other girls, it is a very good thing indeed. May God bless you!

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

231. SPEECH AT SIR RAMANATHAN GIRLS' SCHOOL, JAFFNA

November 29, 1927

It has given me great joy indeed to be able to come here this morning as if to put a finishing touch to the whole round of visits to different scholastic institutions in Jaffna. The exquisite taste and simplicity with which the whole of this ceremony has been arranged this morning, I assure you, has not escaped my observation. I appreciate also the generous purse of Rs. 1,111, which too unlike most purses is given in a khadi bag. To crown all, Lady Ramanathan has placed in my hands a kind telegram from Sir P. Ramanathan who himself is unable to attend this function. I should have always regretted if I had not been able to visit this institution, the monument of Sir Ramanathan's generosity and thoughtfulness. Lady Ramanathan had furnished me very considerately with an advance copy of your address and the report of this institution and two copies of your magazine.

Your promise in your address that you are going to observe this day as an annual function and devote it to collections for khadi work has touched me to the heart. I know that this is no idle promise on your part, but that you are going to fulfil that promise religiously. If the famishing millions on whose behalf I am touring could possibly understand this determination on the part of their sisters, I know it will gladden their hearts, but you will be pained to be informed by me that these dumb millions in whose behalf you have given me this purse and so many purses have been given in Ceylon would not even understand such things, if I attempted to tell them. No description that I can give you of their miserable life can possibly give you a proper perspective of what that position means.

This immediately brings me to the question—what are you to do for these and such people. It is easy enough to suggest a little more simplicity, a little more hardness in life, but that would be merely tinkering with the question. Thoughts and thoughts like this brought me to the spinning-wheel. I said to myself, as I say to you now, that if you could but establish a living link between those famishing millions and yourselves, there is some hope for you, for them and for the world. Religious instruction you have, and very properly, in this institution. You have got also a beautiful

temple. I see from your time-table that you begin the day by offering worship, all of which is good and elevating, but it may easily amount to a beautiful ceremonial and nothing else if that worship is not translated day after day into some practical work. So, I say, in order to follow out that act of worship, take up the spinning-wheel, sit at it for half an hour and think of those millions that I have described to you and say in the name of God: 'I spin for the sake of them'. You will find at once, if you do it with your heart, with knowledge, that you are the humbler and the purer for that real act of devotion. If you will dress not for show, but for covering your limbs, you will certainly not have any hesitation in wearing khadi and establish that bond between you and the millions. This is not all that I want to say to the girls of this institution.

If you will be deserving of the care and attention that Sir Ramanathan has bestowed upon you and that is being bestowed upon you by Lady Ramanathan and the staff working under her care, you will have to do many more things. I saw in your magazines mention made with some degree of pardonable pride of what some of the old schoolgirls had been doing. I saw notices after this style. So and so married so and so—four or five notices. There is, I know, nothing wrong in a girl who has come of age, about 25 or even 22 years old, in getting married. But I miss in these notices a single mention of a girl who had dedicated herself to service only. So, I propose to tell you what I told the girls of His Highness the Maharaja's College for Girls in Bangalore that we get a poor return for the great efforts that are being made by educationists and by lavish charities, if you all become mere dolls and disappear from life as soon as you are discharged from such institutions. A vast majority of girls disappear from public life as soon as they are discharged from schools and colleges. You of this institution have no such business. You have the example of Miss Emery and the example of others who have been superintending, and who have been, if I am not speaking incorrectly, maidens. Every girl, every Indian girl is not born to marry. I can show many girls who are today dedicating themselves to service instead of serving a single man. It is high time that Hindu girls produce or reproduce an edition, and if possible a glorified edition, of Parvati and Sita. You claim to be Saivites[1]. You know what Parvati did. She did not spend money for a husband, nor would she allow herself to be bought, and she to-

[1] Worshippers of Siva

day adorns the Hindu firmament by being classed with one of the seven *satis*—not because of the degrees in an educational institution that she received, but because of her unheard-of *tapasya*. Here I understand that there is the fateful system of dowry whereby it becomes most difficult for young women to get suitable matches. The grown-up girls—some of you are grown up—are expected to resist all such temptations. If you will resist these evil customs, you will, some of you, have to begin by remaining maidens either for life, or at least for a number of years. Then, when it is time for you to marry, and you feel that you must have a partner in life, you will not be in thirst of one who has money, or fame, or beauty of person, but you will be in search of one even as Parvati was, one who has got all the matchless qualities which can go to make good character. You know how Naradji described Siva to Parvati—a mere pauper smeared with ashes, no handsomeness about him and a *brahmachari*; and Parvati said—that is my husband. You won't have several editions of Siva unless some of you will be content to offer *tapas*, not for thousands of years as Parvati did. We frail human beings cannot afford to do it, but you can do so at least during your lifetime. If you will accept these conditions, you will refuse to disappear in the kingdom of dolls, but will aspire to be *satis* like Parvati, Damayanti, Sita and Savitri. Then and not till then, in my humble opinion, will you have deserved an institution of this character. May God fire you with this ambition, and if you are inspired, may He help you to realize this ambition.

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

232. *SPEECH AT TELLIPALLI WEAVING SCHOOL, JAFFNA*

November 29, 1927

Mahatmaji congratulated the management in having established the weaving school but told them that it would not make a thorough success unless they introduced hand-spinning also. The success of a weaving school was not to be measured by the necessity of those who were trained in it to make a few rupees per month, but was to be measured by the manner in which it could make the community rich and make the institution self-supporting. They would be thoroughly disappointed if they separated hand-spinning from hand-weaving and demanded wages for the former. He hoped that the spirit of Hindus and Christians in joining together to welcome him would continue to guide all their relations.

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

233. SPEECH AT JAFFNA COLLEGE, JAFFNA

November 29, 1927

It has given me the greatest pleasure to visit so many educational institutions in this peninsula of yours. Amongst these pleasures, not the least is visiting this, which, I understand, is the oldest educational institution in this peninsula. Moreover, I am given to understand that many old boys of this institution are today distinguished servants of the country. Lastly, I had the pleasure of meeting your Vice-Principal in Bangalore and the two Secretaries of the Reception Committee are also old boys of this school. It always gives me pleasure to see the smiling faces of boys and girls. I know also that the work that I have the privilege of doing is today being done by so many grown-up boys who have given their all to the service of the motherland. Your purse therefore is very precious to me. I know that all the moneys, and by no means a small sum, that I have received from boys and girls, will bear greater fruit than the moneys received from old and wise men. Your money comes with the stamp of innocence upon it, and it goes also to millions or some of the millions of men and women who are innocent, and deliberately perhaps, because they cannot be otherwise. . . .[1]

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

[1] Then Gandhiji spoke on khadi, truth and love.

234. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, RAMNAD

November 30, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am obliged to you for the addresses, all these yarn garlands and the various purses. Truly God is great. And if we have eyes to see we can see His greatness from moment to moment. At half past five when it poured in torrents, I had made up my mind that there would be no meeting. But my fears have been falsified, the clouds have cleared away and we see a large gathering here. I am not so arrogant as to suppose that God has disposed of these things just for my sake or for your sake. But I am humble enough to recognize the greatness of God in events as they march past us and make themselves accommodating to us. And we should be humble enough not to quarrel with God or think that He is not great enough when events seem to go wrong and everything seems to be in our way. If you like you have a demonstration of the nothingness of human wishes even as I am speaking,[1] and I would like you all, although you may open out your umbrellas to recognize the littleness of man and the greatness of God in the rain that seems to be threatening us. But I have not come here to lecture on the greatness of God. Nor does He require any advertisers like myself to advertise His greatness. It is written in indelible letters on the vast page of time. Let us therefore bow down our heads in reverence to Him and pass on to our work.[2]

I was looking forward to coming to this place as soon as I ever could, and it grieved me when I was within thirty miles of this place that I could not at that time come here. It therefore gives me great pleasure now to be able to fulfil the wish that I had to come here and receive your purse. Let me tell you that before I came here I went to a women's meeting. They wanted no speech; they would have no speech. They were, from what I could see of them, very poor women. All they wanted to do was to pay almost all they had. And if they had two coins tied in

[1] There was a gentle shower of rain and several in the audience opened out their umbrellas.

[2] The rain had by now completely stopped.

one of the corners of their saris, then one coin was given by themselves and another they made their babies to surrender. And it gave me great joy when I saw pice after pice coming into my lap. Those eyes and those hands showed me unmistakably that pice as they were, they were hearts' gifts and all that the possessor had. And perhaps you will agree with me when I say that the gifts of these pice were richer gifts than the calculated gifts made by the donors who put their donations in this purse that has been handed to me. I have brought in this incident and this comparison not in any way to criticize or belittle your purse. I have brought in this incident, one amongst hundreds that I have had the good fortune to witness, in order to give a physical, visible, striking demonstration of the fact that this is a movement on behalf of the paupers of India. I have brought in this incident also to show you that our women are not to be despised and not to be considered beneath the notice of man and to be treated only as slaves or objects of man's lust. I have brought in this incident to ask you to fill yourselves with the faith, the immovable faith of these simple sisters of ours. Lastly, I have brought in this incident in answer to the opening paragraph of your address.

You want me to take part in leading the political struggle in India. As I said at Coimbatore, I feel that I am doing my humble best in the political struggle also, inasmuch as I devote my whole time to the spinning-wheel. But taking the word 'political' even in the sense in which you are using it, that spiritualizing of politics that you have mentioned in your address is impossible of achievement unless we have the faith of these simple sisters. It is no faith that calculates, that is afraid, that hesitates. When a child nestles itself in the bosom of its mother and feels absolutely secure, the child does not calculate and ask itself whether the mother is strong enough to protect it or not. And if those of us who are politically minded, who are in the habit of attending meetings, speaking on platforms or being spoken to, if those politically-minded people had that wonderful faith in the destiny of India, if they had that implicit faith in the simple message of the tiny charkha, I have no doubt that we would have been in possession of swaraj a long time ago. Let not the charkha be a solution of the economic problem of India. Let it tend at least to be a test of our faith. I have presented the matchless economics, the irrefutable economics of the charkha, to my calculating countrymen. But if we had faith there would be no necessity of demonstrating the economics of the spinning-wheel. It should be enough

that it is a harmless thing; it is a somewhat useful thing for those who use it, that it has given some employment to some women; it is enough if these things are capable of enabling us to stretch forth our faith and for millions to swear by it. For it is easy enough for any man or woman to see that if we the millions can but pin our faith to some such thing as this, there is at once set free an energy on the part of the whole nation, a united energy such as would become irresistible. I have that faith in the charkha and therefore I am content to wait till there is that general awakening and a consequent general faith on the part of the people of this great but distressed land.

You mention in your address the Statutory Commission. Being in that beautiful scented island, I was isolated for nearly 17 days or more, strictly speaking 23 days, from all the happenings in India save for the scraps that I was able to pick up from the local papers in Colombo. Having re-entered the country I shall pick up the threads of events. But meanwhile I can repeat what I said to the reporters in Ceylon, that in the matter of the Statutory Commission I had surrendered my conscience to the President of the Congress and the Congress in general.[1]

You ask me to make this a khadi centre. If it was at all possible I have no doubt that the Council of the All-India Spinners' Association will certainly open a branch here. I know that so far as spinning and weaving are concerned this is a favourable centre. But three things are necessary to enable the Association to open centres in various parts of the country—proper workers, a suitable atmosphere and money. Money is no difficulty, and even if there was you have now given a purse. Favourable circumstances there are. But everywhere workers are the greatest difficulty. Self-sacrificing, industrious workers who will study the technique of the spinning-wheel and the loom and of the khadi trade are very few in the country. And if you have honest workers of the qualities that I have described, I would invite you to correspond immediately with Sjt. Ramanathan, Secretary of the Tamil Nadu branch of the All-India Spinners' Association.

I was glad indeed to receive the two purses from the students of the school here. The address of the Raja's High School boys apologizes for the slenderness of the purse. And some of the boys in Ceylon have given even as much as one thousand per school

[1] *Vide* "Interview to the Press", 13-11-1927.

as the Ramanathan Girls' College gave only yesterday. The Students' purse, if the moneys are to be counted, is slender enough. But I don't count the slenderness or richness of the purse by its contents. If like the purse from the contributions of the sisters whom I have already described, if like that purse, the students' purse also represents all that they could possibly save, then there need be no apology for the slenderness of their purse. Whereas, if the students have contributed stingily, let them reconsider their position and give the best they can. I was glad indeed of the promise in the students' address that they propose henceforth to buy as much khadi as they possibly can. Having made that promise, I ask them to fulfil it in the best manner possible. The students should know that they should realize that in their hands lies the future of the country. And that future is not hopeful at all if the students do not develop a fine character, if they do not possess pure minds and purer hearts and if they are not true to their promises. Let the students realize that all literary knowledge without the backing of a strong character is worse than useless.

Two words to this general audience. Those who are given to the drink habit must give up drink and all should work for complete prohibition in this land. And it is high time that we forget that there ever was any such curse like untouchability in this land. I tell you that I was ashamed when I discovered in Ceylon that our neighbours had also been tainted by this curse. And if we are really desirous of swaraj let us forget that some of us are superior to some others.

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

235. *HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY*

Dr. Ansari told me when I was recently in Delhi that he heard in Calcutta from reliable men that I had lost faith and interest in Hindu-Muslim unity and that I was avoiding Mussalman friends such as the Ali Brothers. Dr. Ansari therefore proposed that in order to dispel any illusion and disarm suspicion, I should make a declaration of my faith before a public meeting in Delhi. I could not accept the proposal if only because the old Delhi of Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and Swami Shraddhanandji had become the new Delhi of hooligans where it was difficult for me to stay and much more so to address public meetings. I however promised Dr. Ansari that I would clear my position as early as I could through these pages. This I do now.

My interest and faith in Hindu-Muslim unity and unity among all the communities remain as strong as ever. My method of approach has changed. Whereas formerly I tried to achieve it by addressing meetings, joining in promoting and passing resolutions, now I have no faith in these devices. We have no atmosphere for them. In an atmosphere which is surcharged with distrust, fear and hopelessness, in my opinion these devices rather hinder than help heart-unity. I therefore rely upon prayer and such individual acts of friendship as are possible. Hence I have lost all desire to attend meetings held for achieving unity. This however does not mean that I disapprove of such attempts. On the contrary, those who have faith in such meetings must hold them. I should wish them all success.

I am out of tune with the present temper of both the communities. From their own standpoint they are perhaps entitled to say that my method has failed. I recognized that among those whose opinions count, I am in a hopeless minority. By my taking part in meetings and the like I could not render any useful service. And as I have no other interest but to see real unity established, where I cannot serve by my presence I regard it as some service if I abstain.

For me there is no hope save through truth and non-violence. I know that they will triumph when everything else has failed. Whether therefore I am in the minority of one or I have a majority, I must go along the course that God seems to have shown me. Today non-violence as a mere policy is a broken reed. It answers well as a policy when there are no active forces working against it in your own camp. But when you have to reckon with those who believe in violence as a creed to be enforced under given circumstances, the expedience of non-violence breaks down. Then is the time for the out-and-out believer in non-violence to test his creed. Both my creed and I are therefore on our trial. And if we do not seem to succeed, let the critic or the onlooker blame not the creed but me. I know I am often obliged to struggle against myself. I have not become incapable as yet of violence in thought at least. But I am striving with all the might God has given me.

Now perhaps the reader understands why I am not found in the company of the Ali Brothers as often as I was before. They still hold me in their pockets. They are still as dear to me as blood-brothers. I am not sorry for having thrown in my lot with the Mussalmans in the hour of their need. I should do so again if the occasion arose. But though we have a common cause we have not common methods today. They would have had me at Simla

and Calcutta.[1] Since the Kohat riots[2] we have not been able to agree as to the reading of facts. But friendship that insists upon agreement on all matters is not worth the name. Friendship to be real must ever sustain the weight of honest differences, however sharp they may be. I regard our differences to be honest, and therefore let those who suspect a breach or even coolness between us know that my friendship with the Ali Brothers and other Mussalman friends whom the reader can easily name remains as firm as ever.

Young India, 1-12-1927

236. HELP FROM AMERICA

Owing to continuous travelling I have not been able to publish earlier the following letter from the Rev. John Haynes Holmes[3]:

> When the news came to me of the terrible floods which swept through your country in August, I published the story at once in *Unity*. I have followed this up now with a public appeal in co-operation with Professor Harry Ward, for contributions to what we are calling a 'Gandhi Relief Fund'. We are printing our appeal in various religious newspapers and liberal magazines, and I hope for some good results.
>
> Meanwhile, *Unity* has established its own Fund, and I am sending you herewith a money order representing exchange on the initial gift of $ 100.00. We will send along other funds as fast as they come in.
>
> May I express to you my profound sympathy over this great disaster which has befallen you and your people? I am particularly distressed that Ahmedabad should have suffered so terribly and that the Ashram should have been in the midst of the calamity. Any further information you can send me, may be of great help in raising further funds.

I am sure the reader will not look at the amount received from America. We have no right perhaps to expect any help from distant lands in our local calamities, such as the recent floods in Gujarat. It is therefore the motive behind the unsolicited and unexpected American contribution that counts.

Young India, 1-12-1927

[1] A Unity Conference of Hindu and Muslim leaders was held at Simla under the chairmanship of M. A. Jinnah in the beginning of September 1927; and another such conference was convened by the All-India Congress Committee in Calcutta on October 27, 1927.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XXVI, pp. 336-44.

[3] American clergyman, author of *My Gandhi*

237. *KHADI ECONOMICS*

I have two pamphlets before me, one called *Economics of Khadi* by Sjt. Rajendra Prasad of Bihar, to be had of Bihar Charkha Sangha office, Muzaffarpur, for three annas. This pamphlet is the first of a series to be issued by the Bihar Branch of the Charkha Sangha. The other is the report and accounts of the Gandhi Ashram, Tiruchengodu, conducted under the direction of Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari. This can be had from the Secretary, Gandhi Ashram, Tiruchengodu (S. India), for one-anna postage stamp.

The first is a sustained argument put in a popular style and in a brief manner so as to enable the average busy reader to understand the economics of khadi. I must not attempt to re-summarize the argument which is itself a summary of the case for the spinning-wheel. But it may be stated that after examining all the arguments for and against, Rajendra Babu has shown that only the spinning-wheel can successfully displace foreign cloth, nd only the spinning-wheel can give a supplementary occupation to the twenty-two crores and forty lakhs of agriculturists of India who without the wheel are living, and must continue to live, in a condition of semi-starvation because they are and must be in a condition of unemployment at least for 120 days in the year.

Sjt. Rajagopalachari's report is a scientific study in facts and figures, and seems entirely to illustrate and fortify Rajendra Babu's argument. The reader will be interested to learn that 85% of the expenditure of the Ashram goes to the spinners and weavers, 9½% to the workers, and 5½% for other establishment charges. The report contains instructive and illustrative tables showing the earnings of spinners and weavers and dhobis, all of whom probably and the spinners certainly, but for the advent of the charkha, would not be getting the income they are receiving today. The report contains also a certified account of the income and expenditure of the Ashram activity. It devotes a page to show how the price one pays for khadi is distributed. Here are the figures:

Cotton grower	37 p.c.
Spinners and weavers	54 p.c.
Workers	6 p.c.
Other expenses	3 p.c.

and it says:

"Dress you must have, but if you choose to buy khadi, you help the reconstruction of rural India."

This Ashram alone has distributed within 2½ years Rs. 1,24,536 among the poorest villagers surrounding it, and that not by way of charity but against work done in their own homes. The Ashram maintains a free dispensary, which during the past 11 months attended to 10,145 patients. 148 operations were performed during the period. The patients included the so-called untouchables.

Young India, 1-12-1927

238. INTERVIEW TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MADRAS,
December 1, 1927

To the several questions put by the pressman Gandhiji declined any answer. He said:

I am too raw from Ceylon to answer any question. . . .

Gandhiji's attention was next drawn to his Ceylon statement[1] with regard to the Statutory Commission[2] that his conscience was in the keeping of the President of the Congress. Gandhiji was asked if he still adhered to that statement and whether he agreed to the Congress President's view that the need of the hour was a revision of the Gauhati programme in the direction of the revival of organized mass action on the issue of the policy underlying the appointment of the Statutory Commission.[3] Would the Mahatma personally lead such a movement? Gandhiji repeated his answer that for the past few weeks he had been out of touch with events in India. He did not want to say anything just at present before he had had time to study the question more fully. Gandhiji remarked:

My conscience is still in the keeping of Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar[4] until Dr. Ansari[5] mounts the throne at Madras.

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

[1] *Vide* "Interview to the Press", 13-11-1927.
[2] *Vide* Appendix VIII.
[3] For extracts from the Viceroy's statement, *vide* Appendix VII.
[4] The outgoing Congress President
[5] The President-elect of the Congress

239. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CHICACOLE*

December 3, 1927

You seem to be dividing all the good things with poor Utkal[1]. I flattered myself with the assumption that my arrival here is one of the good things, for, I was going to devote all the twenty days to seeing the skeletons of Orissa; but as you, the Andhras, are the gatekeepers of Orissa on this side, you have intercepted my march. But I am glad you have anticipated me also. After entering Andhra Desh, I have been doing my business with you and I know God will reward all those unknown people who have been co-operating with me who am a self-appointed representative of *Daridranarayana*. And here, too, you have been doing the same thing. Last night, several sisters came and presented me with a purse. But let me tell you this is not after all my tour in Andhra. I am not going to let you alone so easily as this, nor will Deshabhakta Konda Venkatappayya let me alone, because I have toured in some parts of Ganjam. I am under promise to tour Andhra during the early part of next year, and let me hope what you are doing is only a foretaste of what you are going to do next year.

You have faith in true non-co-operation. There is the great drink evil, eating into the vitals of the labouring population. I would like you to non-co-operate with that evil without a single thought and I make a sporting proposal, viz., that those who give up drink habit should divide their savings with me on behalf of *Daridranarayana*. Then I see that many of you are making chimneys of your mouths by the vicious smoke habit. You, who smoke, do not know what a filthy habit it is. I saw that many of the people, when I made the appeal, threw away their cigars and cigarettes. The elderly people by indulging in this vicious habit do not know what a legacy they are leaving to their children. You know, as I know, that many children steal money in order to satisfy their curiosity to smoke. I ask you therefore to non-co-operate with the smoke habit, and again divide your savings with me.

So also must Hindus non-co-operate with the devil of untouchability. I give you my assurance that that devil is keeping us from God, and it is a barrier created for our own destruction.

[1] Another name for Orissa

Mahatmaji then proceeded to answer some questions handed to him by someone in the audience. The first question was: "What are the means now to be adopted by young men for the uplift of the Mother country?" Mahatmaji said:

There are many things that I can suggest, but there is one thing which is the easiest for them to do and that is khadi work. They can set apart a certain sum every month or every year to be devoted for khadi work. If they have the time, they can devote it to organizing khadi work in their own district. If they begin to do it, they will find that they have given what is best in them. If they cannot do so or if they have not confidence enough to be able to do organizing work, they can give half an hour a day to spinning and send their yarn to the All-India Spinners' Association and become a member.

The second question dealt with the educational and other qualifications required for a public worker. Mahatmaji said:

So far as educational qualifications are concerned, besides knowing the provincial vernacular, they must know also the *Rashtra-bhasha*[1]—Hindi. But the other qualifications are even far more important. They must be strictly honest and their private character must be pure. Men whose eyes are not straight and whose heart is full of animal passion are not fit for doing political work. And in my opinion, unless he believes in truth and non-violence at any cost, he has no business to be a politician.

Answering the third question, Mahatmaji said:

Whilst all our leaders are conceiving and cooking all kinds of schemes, we, the rank and file, cannot do better than achieving the message of khadi to its fullest extent. It is not a small thing for you and me to take part in an effort to save sixty crores of rupees. You and I cannot pack the Councils, Assembly and Municipalities. Even if we would, we could not have all the qualifications. But every one of us is born with the qualification for khadi. It requires not much training except the training of the heart. By doing khadi work you will find that the power is descending upon you.

The Hindu, 9-12-1927

[1] National language

240. ESSAY ON KHADI

Readers will recall that essays in English were invited on the subject of khadi, in view of the prize announced by Shri Revashanker Jagjivan[1]. Accordingly, the essay written jointly by Professor Puntambekar and Shri Varadachari was awarded the prize. As this is well worth study, it has been translated [into Gujarati] for the Jamnadas Bhagwandas Memorial Series. Shri Chhaganlal Joshi of the Satyagraha Ashram has done the translation and it has now been published. It is priced at Re. 1. The total number of pages is 260. The translation runs into 215 pages, the rest being appendices. All the appendices are useful. The last appendix gives a short history of khadi in Gujarat; in other words, it shows where khadi was formerly produced in Gujarat and how that priceless industry came to be ruined. The language used in the translation is simple. Gujarati readers will have no difficulty in understanding it. Those who wish to understand well the secret underlying the activity of spinning must positively go through this book.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 4-12-1927

241. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, BERHAMPUR[2]

December 4, 1927

SISTERS,

You have presented two purses for the khadi work. I acknowledge your present with gratitude. You must not think that I consider some of you as Oriyas and some as Telugus. You should feel that all are Indians. Some say that they belong to Andhra and some say that they belong to Orissa. Let all of you belong to India. Let all of you share each other's misery and happiness. Only thus can you become like Sita. Sita did not consider herself a citizen of Ayodhya. She always considered herself as belonging to the whole of India. I am really glad that you have written this welcome address in the national

[1] Revashanker Jagjivan Zaveri of Bombay

[2] In Orissa

language, that is, Hindi. Let all of you give up foreign saris. Let all of you use only khadi. There is no necessity for a woman to wear beautiful saris and ornaments. The only thing a woman needs is purity. Let all of you wear khadi. Let all of you be pure and truthful. You should not consider anyone as untouchable. In India, that is, Bharatavarsha, it is a great sin to consider anyone as an untouchable. For heaven's sake do not commit that sin. Love those who are poor, diseased and hungry. Let all of you prove that you love them by spinning yarn on the charkha for at least half an hour every day. I appeal to those who have not contributed anything towards this Khadi Fund to contribute money or ornaments.

[From Oriya]

The Samaj, 10-12-1927

242. SPEECH AT STUDENTS' MEETING, BERHAMPUR

December 4, 1927

PROFESSORS, STUDENTS AND BROTHERS,

Our programme in this meeting will be unlike the programmes followed in other meetings. In our Satyagraha Ashram, for many years now, at 4.15 a.m. in the morning and at 7 p.m. in the evening, we hold congregational prayers. When the Ashramites go to other places this schedule is observed even there. Knowing that it is difficult to hold prayers at 7 p.m. in the evening regularly [during tours], we have ruled that prayer must be held at night before going to bed.

On Friday, December 2, it was very late in the night when we entered into Ganjam district. I forgot to pray before going to bed due to heavy work. When I woke up in the dawn, I trembled in fear. I could see that I had committed a great mistake before the Lord. So we decided that anyone forgetting to offer prayers must do some kind of penance. We also decided that wherever we were, we must remember the name of Rama at least once in the evening. I was scheduled to come to this meeting at 7 p.m. and we were supposed to pray together; but while coming in the motor-car from Chhatrapur I found that it was already 7 p.m. So I prayed by myself in the motor-car; but when we have decided on collective prayer, I beg you to pray here and now. Those students and others who have faith in prayer, let them pray with closed eyes.

After the prayer, I will try to explain its utility. Those who are unwilling to pray, I request them to sit quietly.[1]

As food is necessary for the body, prayer is necessary for the soul. A man may be able to do without food for a number of days, —as MacSwiney did for over 70 days—but believing in God, man cannot, should not, live a moment without prayer. You will say that we see lots of people living without prayer. I dare say they do, but it is the existence of the brute which, for man, is worse than death. I have not the shadow of a doubt that the strife and quarrels with which our atmosphere is so full today are due to the absence of the spirit of true prayer. You will demur to the statement, I know, and contend that millions of Hindus, Mussalmans and Christians do offer their prayers. It is because I had thought you would raise this objection that I used the words 'true prayers'. The fact is we have been offering our prayers with the lips but hardly ever with our hearts, and it is to escape, if possible, the hypocrisy of the lip-prayer, that we in the Ashram repeat every evening the last verses of the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The condition of the 'Equable in Spirit' that is described in those verses, if we contemplate them daily, is bound slowly to turn our hearts towards God. If you students would base your education on the true foundation of a pure character and pure heart there is nothing so helpful as to offer your prayers every day truly and religiously.

The Samaj, 10-12-1927 and *Young India*, 15-12-1927

[1] The first two paragraphs are translated from *The Samaj*, an Oriya paper. What follows is from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter", published in *Young India*, 15-12-1927. Mahadev Desai adds: "The students' meeting had been timed at 7 p.m. Although we did not reach the meeting at 7 and had to have our prayers whilst in motion, Gandhiji decided to have the congregational prayer at the meeting. So we had it, the students keeping pin-drop silence. . . "

243. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

BERHAMPUR,
December 5, 1927

JAMNALALJI BAJAJ,
ASHRAM
SABARMATI

MOHANLAL DID MEET. SENT HIM HOME BEFORE WIRES FROM YOU JAYADAYALJI.

BAPU

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 68

244. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

BERHAMPUR,
Silence Day [*December 5, 1927*][1]

SISTERS,

I got your letter written by Manibehn. I have very little time to write today. I am convinced that we should not permit jewels in the Ashram. As long as there is terrible starvation in our land it is a sin for us to keep or to put on a ring weighing even a grain. Our clothes must be just sufficient to cover our nakedness and to protect us against heat and cold. All of you should try to reach this ideal.

I shall not write today about how the desire for ornaments arises. It looks as though you have also not understood my question properly.

How is it that Lakshmibehn is ill? She never used to fall ill.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3679

[1] Gandhiji was in Berhampur on this date.

245. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

December 5, 1927

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I missed one mail this time. I could not attend to things regularly while I was in Ceylon. There was plenty of travelling to do. When, however, I miss a mail you should not feel worried or follow my example. You will be free to miss a mail when both of you become as busy as I am if you have not learnt by then to get over my weaknesses. Truly speaking, however, a real heir is one who enhances the legacy he has inherited.

Sushila is right when she says that in the realm of art there can be no distinction between indigenous and foreign, but her statement calls for some reflection. Lovers of art take a superficial view of art and use it as a cover for many weaknesses. We should, therefore, examine what we mean by art. Not everything which appeals to the eye is art. What is accepted as art by many experts may not be art. I have read conflicting opinions about many paintings and statues expressed by art-critics who have become famous in the world. We should, therefore, think what art means. The book *What Is Art?*[1] has been translated [into Gujarati]. Sushila should read it. If you cannot get it there, please write to me.

Devdas suffered very much during his illness. There is some affection in the nose. There was temperature again. He is better now. Ba has gone to stay with him. I am in Utkal today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4731

[1] By Leo Tolstoy

246. *SPEECH AT CHHATRAPUR*[1]

[On or before *December 6, 1927*]

I am pining for a day when all this unhealthy competition between sister languages of India will have ceased. Why should we not love all of them equally, as a brother holding a number of sisters in the same affection? The result of the wretched competition has been that we forget our vernaculars and are jealous of others, and fondly believe that English would take the place of the common language of India, and even of the vernaculars. Indeed a suggestion had come to me to address the meeting here in English. Well, I take this as disaffection towards the daughter language of the motherland, and an unhealthy affection for a foreign tongue. Not that I hate English, but I love Hindi more. That is why I am beseeching the lettered classes of India to make Hindi their common language. It is through Hindi that we can get into touch with and promote the growth of the other vernaculars of the provinces. If our intellects and hearts had not been atrophied owing to our having to learn through a foreign medium, there would be no reason why we should not all be knowing five or six vernaculars. And my remarks regarding the competition between languages apply also to our narrow provincialism. It is that provincialism that has prevented the full growth of nationalism in us. The golden rule for the promotion of nationalism is that the stronger should help and sacrifice for the weaker as much as is possible. And now you will understand the rationale of khadi, which is intended to promote a healthy nationalism, and which embraces within its fold the poor and the downtrodden.

Young India, 15-12-1927

[1] Mahadev Desai says in his "Weekly Letter": "In Chicacole the youngsters sang the *Janaganamana*. The lines enumerating the provinces including Madras and Utkal were mutilated by some parochial Andhra who had dropped Utkal and added Andhra instead! . . . The Chhatrapur meeting was the first quiet meeting we had after many noisy ones, and Gandhiji took an opportunity to animadvert upon this narrow spirit."

247. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

Tuesday [December 6, 1927][1]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

I got your letter. I look forward to a letter from you on the due dates; if, however, I don't get one, I understand. Your name is always on my lips. When it becomes necessary to say anything unpleasant like a note out of tune, even then it will, in fact, be perfectly in tune since it will be the truth and truth is always in tune. Do not, therefore, omit to tell me what you think I must be told. I did not receive the letters which you mention. Letters addressed to me do not generally get lost, but these ones at any rate did not reach me. I am sure many errors remain in *My Experiments with Truth.* I exercise great care but, when memory betrays me, to whom shall I complain about the misfortune? Please do not omit to draw my attention to any fact, whether important or unimportant.

"So tenacious is life, it does not leave even now."[2] I do fear this. Mahadev, of course, sang the line for his own purpose. You may hear the history behind it when he narrates it to you. You have done very well in absorbing yourself in your present work.[3] It is also a good thing that you get an opportunity to visit the Ashram from time to time. Do continue to send your suggestions and criticisms. Give your very life in making a model village a really model one; men with real life will then come and live in it.

Ba has gone there, that is, to live with Devdas. There is no time to write more.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 7769. Courtesy: Radhabehn Chaudhri

[1] From the reference to Kasturba Gandhi having gone to live with Devdas, it appears that this letter was written about the same time as "Letter to Manilal and Sushila Gandhi", 5-12-1927.

[2] The opening line of a song from Dadu, a Hindi poet of the 16th century

[3] The addressee had taken up constructive work in villages.

248. DISTORTION OF TRUTH

A correspondent has been endeavouring with the help of the head master of a high school to introduce the teaching of the *Gita* among its boys. But at a recent meeting convened to organize *Gita* readings a bank manager got up and disturbed the even tenor of the proceedings by saying that students had not the *adhikara*, 'qualification', for studying the *Gita*; it was not a plaything to be placed before students. The correspondent sends me a long and argued letter about the incident and sends in support of his contention some apt saying from Ramakrishna Paramahamsa from which I cull the following:

> Boys and youths should be encouraged to seek God. They are like unpecked fruits, being totally untainted by worldly desires. Once such desires have entered their minds, it is very difficult to make them tread the path to salvation.
>
> Why do I love young men so much? Because they are masters of the whole (16 annas) of their minds which get divided and sub-divided as they grow up. One half of the mind of a married man goes to his wife. When a child is born it takes away one-fourth (four annas), and the remaining one-fourth (four annas) is scattered over parents, wordly honours, dress, etc. Therefore a young mind can easily know God. It is very difficult for old people to do so.
>
> The parrot cannot be taught to sing if the membrane of its throat becomes hardened with age. It must be taught while it is young. Similarly, in old age it is difficult for the mind to be fixed on God. It can be easily done so in youth.
>
> If a seer of adulterated milk contains a *chhatank* (sixteenth part of a seer) of water, it can be thickened into *kshira* (condensed milk) with very little labour and consumption of fuel. But should there be three *paos* (quarter seer) of water in a seer, the milk cannot be easily thickened and a large consumption of fuel will be required. *A young mind, being but slightly adulterated with worldly desires, can be easily turned towards God; this cannot be done with the minds of old people which are highly adulterated with such desires.*
>
> The tender bamboo can be easily bent, but the full-grown bamboo breaks when an attempt is made to bend it. It is easy to bend young hearts towards God, but the heart of the old escapes the hold when so drawn.
>
> The human mind is like a package of mustard seed. As it is very difficult to gather the seeds that escape out of a torn package and are

scattered in all directions, so when the human mind runs in diverse directions and is occupied with many worldly things, it is not a very easy task to collect and concentrate it. The mind of a youth, not running in diverse directions, can be easily fixed on anything; but the mind of an old man being totally occupied with worldly things, it is very hard for him to draw it away from them and fix it on God.

I have heard of *adhikara* in connection with the Vedas, but I never knew that the *Gita* required the qualifications that the bank manager had in mind. It would have been better if he had stated the nature of the qualifications he required. The *Gita* clearly states that it is meant for all but scoffers. If Hindu students may not read the *Gita* they may not read any religious works at all. Indeed the original conception in Hinduism is that the student life is the life of a *brahmachari* who should begin it with a knowledge of religion *coupled with practice* so that he may digest what he learns and weave religious conduct into his life. The student of old began to live his religion before he knew what it was, and this conduct was followed by due enlightenment, so that he might know the reason for the conduct prescribed for him.

Adhikara then there certainly was. But it was the *adhikara* of right conduct known as the five *yamas* or cardinal restraints—*ahimsa* (innocence), *satya* (truth), *asteya* (non-stealing), *aparigraha* (non-possession), and *brahmacharya* (celibacy). These were the rules that had to be observed by anybody who wished to study religion. He may not go to religious books for proving the necessity of these fundamentals of religion.

But today the word *adhikara* like many such potent words has suffered distortion, and a dissolute man, simply because he is called Brahmin, has *adhikara* to read and expound Shastras to us, whereas a man, if he is labelled an untouchable because of his birth in a particular state, no matter how virtuous he may be, may not read them.

But the author of the *Mahabharata* of which the *Gita* is a part wrote his great work for the purpose of meeting this insane objection, and made it accessible to all irrespective of the so-called caste, provided, I presume, that he complied with the observances I have described: I add the qualifying expression "I presume" for, at the time of writing, I do not recall the observance of the *yamas* as a condition precedent to a person studying the *Mahabharata*. Experience however shows that the purity of heart and the devotional frame of mind are necessary for a proper understanding of religious books.

The printing age has broken down all barriers and scoffers read religious books with the same freedom (if not greater) that the religiously-minded have. But we are here discussing the propriety of students reading the *Gita* as part of religious instruction and devotional exercise. Here I cannot imagine any class of persons more amenable to the restraints and thus more fitted than students for such instruction. Unfortunately, it is to be admitted that neither the students nor the instructors in the majority of cases think anything of the real *adhikara* of the five restraints.

Young India, 8-12-1927

249. GOD'S TEMPLE

Here in Ceylon where I am writing for *Young India* amid surroundings where Nature has bountifully poured her richest treasures, I recall a letter written by a poetically inclined friend from similar scenes. I share with the reader a paragraph from that letter.

> A lovely morning! Cool and cloudy, with a drowsy sun whose rays are as soft as velvet. It is a strangely quiet morning—there is a hush upon it, as of prayer. And the mists are like incense, and the trees worshippers in a trance, and the birds and insects pilgrims come to chant *bhajans*. Oh! how I wish one could learn true abandonment from Nature! We seem to have forgotten our birthright to worship where and when and how we please. We build temples and mosques and churches to keep our worship safe from prying eyes and away from outside influences, but we forget that walls have eyes and ears, and the roofs might be swarming with ghosts—who knows!
>
> Good Gracious, I shall find myself preaching next! How foolish, on a lovely morning like this? A little child in the garden adjoining is singing as unconsciously and joyously as a bird. I feel inclined to go and take the dust of its little feet. And since I cannot pour out my heart in sound as simply as that little one, my only refuge is in silence!

Churches, mosques and temples, which cover so much hypocrisy and humbug and shut the poorest out of them, seem but a mockery of God and His worship, when one sees the eternally renewed temple of worship under the vast blue canopy inviting every one of us to real worship, instead of abusing His name by quarrelling in the name of religion.

Young India, 8-12-1927

250. SPEECH AT BANPUR

December 8, 1927

I thank you for your address and the purse you have presented. I had given up the idea of visiting Banpur, considering the advice of my doctors. But, when I learnt that the Police were threatening the villagers and warning that if they come to the meeting they would be trampled upon by horses and shot down by soldiers, I resolved to come to Banpur.

Why should you fear? A man who is innocent of crime need not fear. And remember that there would be no one to frighten you if you refused to be afraid. After all the policemen are our kith and kin. When they come to intimidate you, ask them what they want to achieve thereby. If they take you to jail do not resist them. If they abuse you don't abuse them but laugh away. If they belabour you, don't return blow for blow, but go and report the matter to the nearest representative of the people. I would warn you against going to law for after all we do not want the police to be punished but to repent. But if you feel that you must go to law you may. Do not in any case be cowed down. For fear is worse than disease. The man who fears man falls from the state of man. Fear God alone. I am here until two o'clock tomorrow. You can come and tell me all you have to say.[1]

Your address mentions that you have got no khadi work here. Consult the khadi workers of other parts in your district, and till you can produce khadi locally, buy khadi made in Orissa.

The Hindu, 12-12-1927 and *Young India*, 22-12-1927

[1] This paragraph is from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter" published in *Young India*.

251. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

[BOLGARH,
December 10, 1927][1]

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I am now going through the whole programme. Sambalpore will be dropped. I am thankful you are not sending me to Jamshedpur. I am here till Monday. I reach Sakhigopal Monday night and Balasore Wednesday. The rest is uncertain. Yes, indeed, the Kharagpur victory was God's gift.[2]

With love,

MOHAN

[PS.]

I am better.

C. F. ANDREWS
BALASORE

From a photostat: G.N. 2625

252. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

BOLGARH,
December 10, 1927

MY DEAR C.R.,

You will be surprised to know that at least I have three days of quiet in a beautiful little village. Before that the Ganjam programme was worse if possible even than the Ceylon programme, though it yielded twenty thousand. Then a doctor came to take my blood-pressure. Niranjan Babu has made the same arrangements for examination of blood-pressure that you had. And when the doctor read 190, he got frightened and the whole of

[1] From the postmark

[2] In August-September 1927, the Bengal Nagpur Railway Administration decided to reduce the labour force in the Kharagpur Workshop by 1,600 hands. The workmen adopted passive resistance. The workshops were closed on 12th September and were reopened on 8th December when, as the result of an enquiry, some workmen who had been discharged were reinstated and in a few cases the compensation payable to the discharged workmen was enhanced (*India in 1927-28*, pp. 177-8).

the programme has been rearranged. Hence the rest. Personally I am inclined to disbelieve the doctor's reading. However, even if it was wrong reading, it has done good. A new doctor who has come today from Cuttack has read anything between 155 and 165. His own reading is between 155 and 160. Mahadev and Pyarelal read 165. The diastolic is 90-100. If these readings are correct, the blood-pressure is the same as before, and there is nothing to worry. However I am not writing this to tell you about the blood-pressure. Enough for you to know that I am all right.

I am dictating this in order to send you the enclosed. If you can send someone to inspect the village and find out whether we can take up the proposition, please do so. In any case correspond with the writer Mr. G. Subramaniam yourself. I am sending him a postcard telling him that he may expect to hear from you.

I send you also Dr. Joseph's letter. His suggestion commends itself to me. I think we must do some work in Nagercoil, and unless you have anything to the contrary, please enter into correspondence with him telling him that his suggestion is acceptable and that it will be put before the Council of the Association[1] and you will let him know at an early date. Meanwhile you may send the sample of yarn he wants. We ought to be able to take up the yarn, and if there are local weavers, we may be able to get it woven there. Please write to Dr. Joseph early. I have told him that his suggestion commends itself to me and that I have forwarded his letter to you for consideration.

I hope you have fixed up the quarters in Madras. Satis Babu was with me for a day. He will be in Madras and stay with us. You should have ready a moderate amount, no more than one pound at the outside, of goat's milk butter.

Here is a letter from . . . .[2] Please ack. to him. I am not writing to him. His proposal seems to be quite good. Of course we will be with you.

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 12647

[1] All-India Spinners' Association

[2] The source has a blank here.

253. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BOLGARH*

December 10, 1927

Fear is more deadly than disease, such as cholera, smallpox or malaria. Disease wastes only the body, while fear destroys the soul; and men of fear cannot understand God. He who is godfearing, takes the name of God, cannot fear men. I cannot dismiss as untrue reports of friends who have informed me that you have been frightened by the Police and others who have told you that Government would arrest all those who came to me. I am aware of nothing for which Government should make arrests and for aught I know Government has not till now asked people not to contribute to funds raised by me. I understand that Orissa being poor, zamindars and officials want to keep people under fear for their own selfish interests. I have found something striking in the atmosphere since Banpur. I cannot make out how it will satisfy Government if people are kept off from me, or khadi work is interfered with, I cannot bear the thought that anyone should oppress another and feel ashamed that such poor unsophisticated people receive such treatment. I feel humiliated that whereas I cannot put up with oppression from foreigners, my own country's zamindars or officials have been frightening people. If the names of those who have been frightened are given to me I propose visiting them and if the names of the zamindars are also given I shall go and discuss the subject with them. Fear is more deadly than diseases, and I ask them to give up fear, so that the work of those who frighten might automatically cease. Give up drink, gambling and prostitution, so that you can be pure enough to attain God. Though I have not come to raise purses in Orissa I do not hesitate to beg even from the poor for the sake of khadi. May God bless you.

Orissa Government Records

254. LETTER TO ADA ROSENGREEN

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 11, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter[1] for which I thank you. You may translate the book *Self-restraint* v. *Self-indulgence.* As to the terms, I leave them to you. Whatever is given will be devoted to public use.

What you say about the women of the West is only partly true and true also perhaps to an extent for the women of India. But these are society women and very few. So far as the vast majority of women are concerned, they are too engrossed in their own occupations even to think of animal passions. It is reserved for man to become aggressive when animal passion forces him. What you say about passivity is unfortunately too true all the world over, and I do not know that the majority of women will ever be able to overcome that passivity. Perhaps the very construction of their bodies prevents the development of active resistance except under certain well-defined circumstances which are created by special culture. And it is because woman is passive that I have contended that it is man who is the more to blame than woman. And even the society woman of the West does not go beyond subtle attraction and blandishments. I have not known many cases of violence done by women to men. She has a remarkable capacity for controlling herself and pining away rather than be aggressive even under raging passion within her breast.

Yours sincerely,

M. Ada Rosengreen
Lidingo, Sweden

From a photostat: S.N. 12541

[1] Dated 28-9-1927, in which the addressee sought Gandhiji's permission to translate his book into Swedish.

255. LETTER TO HENRY NEIL

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 11, 1927

Dear Friend,

I have your kind letter[1] and enclosures. I do not feel that I can really write anything that would suit you. You will therefore excuse me for not complying with your request.

So far as the question of child welfare is concerned, it is quite true to say that in the sense Lord Lytton means I have not interested myself in the problem, but in a sense, which I consider higher and which takes in not a few thousand children but millions of children, I am continually occupied in attending to their welfare. For, the hand-spinning movement is designed to affect the starving millions of this land including little children. And if I succeed, I know that the child welfare of the type known to you and Lord Lytton is assured.

With reference to the printed sheet by you, it is difficult to reply to it because the writer has seen the same thing from a different angle of vision. I have no desire therefore to enter upon a criticism of the writing which in accordance with your wish I return herewith.

Yours sincerely,

Judge Henry Neil

From a photostat: S.N. 12545

[1] The addressee, in his letter dated 8-10-1927, sought from Gandhiji "a full and complete statement as to the effects of the teachings of Christ on the people of India" and also his views on certain other matters.

256. *LETTER TO THE SECRETARY, SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS, COCHIN*

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 11, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

Owing to continuous travelling I have been able to reach your letter only today. Whilst I have no hesitation about condemning the *Devadasi* institution, it would not be proper on my part to say anything about your appeal seeing that I do not personally know any member of your society. If you are unknown there, you are still more unknown to me. Your duty therefore is to make yourselves known by your honest and strenuous work. And I am sure that there will be benevolent men enough in Cochin to take up your cause.

Yours sincerely,

The Secretary
Society for the Protection of Minors
Cochin

From a microfilm: S.N. 12642

257. *LETTER TO D. R. BHANDARKAR*

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 11, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

Owing to my continuous wanderings I have not been able to reply to your letter earlier. The time-limit you have given me makes it well nigh impossible for me to overtake the task imposed by you on me. Only Mahadev Desai can cope with the work, if I don't do it myself, but I have not the heart to add to the strain already put upon him. Neither he nor I have a moment to spare till February.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. D. R. Bhandarkar
35, Ballygunge, Circular Road
Calcutta

From a microfilm: S.N. 12643

258. LETTER TO J. N. JINENDRADAS

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 11, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I had your long letter. It is not possible to prevent or regulate by pressure of public opinion the emigration of people in distress from one place to another, and it would be wrong to prevent it by legislation. But wise ameliorative legislation in Ceylon can certainly do a great deal to check evils inseparable from the immigration of poor labourers no matter to what race they belong. You should create a public opinion in Ceylon which would demand from the employers of labour a humane treatment, payment of adequate wages and construction of sanitary and commodious dwellings. Instead of regarding Indian labourers as foreigners, you should treat them as your own. After all the labourers go to Ceylon because they are wanted.

Yours sincerely,

J. N. Jinendradas
45, Paranawadiya Road
Maradana, Colombo

From a microfilm: S.N. 12644

259. A LETTER

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 11, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I do not consider the embracing of Christianity as in any way essential for salvation. I do not believe in the exclusive divinity of Jesus Christ. I do not consider that the lives of all Roman Catholic bishops are above suspicion. In my opinion, it is taking a low view of marriage to think that it involves indulgence in animal passion at the instance of either partner. Marriage has far nobler uses. I am not aware that religion

enjoins upon one partner the obligation to indulge at the instance of another. On the contrary, physical union is not permitted till both are equally desirous.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 12645

260. LETTER TO SRI PRAKASA

BOLGARH (ORISSA),
December 11, 1927

MY DEAR SRI PRAKASA,

You must forgive me for not replying to your letter for such a long time, but I have been worked beyond my strength and have had no time left for dealing with voluminous correspondence. It is only because I am having enforced rest at an unknown and out-of-the-way village in Utkal, that I am able to deal with the arrears, and in the natural course I have come upon your letter. Here is the receipt sent to me with your letter from the Ashram.

The *Aaj* people should not complain. Complimentary copies have been sent only to well-known English papers. Even well-known friends have not been supplied with copies simply because after all *Young India* and *Navajivan* are at present very poor concerns. They do not command the circulation of 1920 and 1921, and yet the rigid rule of remaining self-supporting in spite of the handicaps in the shape of not taking advertisements, etc., is observed, and whenever there is anything left over from the running of these papers, the whole of it goes for public cause. Should *Aaj* then expect a free copy, it would be simply taking so much out of poor people's pockets. If, in spite of this explanation, you or the workers at the *Aaj* office expect a free copy, tell me and I shall ask Swami Anand to send one. Of course I know that *Aaj* is a leading paper on your side as is *Basumati* for instance in Calcutta. But so far as I am aware, no vernacular paper has had the English copy.

Do please take me in your confidence either by letter or by coming to me. I would love to share your burdens. Do regard me therefore as a friend who would treasure your confidence and endeavour to lighten your burdens. I am at Sabarmati in January. I am sorry I shall have to go to Kathiawar for a few days during that month.[1] But if you will be there for the whole of the

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Kathiawar Political Conference, Porbandar", 22-1-1928.

month, you can go with me to Kathiawar also and see that weird country.

Do take up the charkha regularly and once you have obtained mastery over it, you will not want to give it up, and it will be a faithful companion speaking to you only at your behest. But you will find all the joy in the handling of it only if you will connect it and through it yourself with the meanest of our people. And why should there be any shame in carrying on the *takli*, if there is no shame in identifying with the poorest. I suppose you do know that the shepherds in Almora and in many other parts of India carry their *taklis*, spinning wool wherever they go.

Yours,

SJT. SRI PRAKASA
BANARAS

From a microfilm: S.N. 12646

261. LETTER TO HARJIVAN KOTAK

BOLGARH, ORISSA,
December 11, 1927

When the mind is disturbed by impure thoughts, instead of trying to drive them out one should occupy it in some work, that is, engage it in purposeful thoughts. Or one may engross it in Ramanama, engage it in reading or in some bodily labour which requires mental attention too. Never let the eyes follow their inclination. If they fall on a woman, withdraw them immediately. It is scarcely necessary for anyone to look straight at a man's or woman's face. This is the reason why *brahmacharis*, and others too, are enjoined to walk with their eyes lowered. If we are sitting, we should keep them steady in one direction. This is an external remedy, but a most valuable one. You may undertake a fast if and when you find one necessary.

It is not necessary for you to go to Satavalekarji. He will certainly teach you some *asanas*. If you wish to go to him to learn them, you may certainly do so. I know him very well. He is a fine man.

You should not be afraid even if you get involuntary discharges during a fast. Vaids say that, even when impure desires are absent, such discharges occur because of pressure in the bowels. But, instead of believing that, it helps us more to believe that they occur because of impure desires. We are not always conscious of such

desires. I had an involuntary discharge in sleep twice during the last two weeks. I cannot recall any dream. I never practised masturbation. One cause of these discharges is of course my physical weakness, but I also know that there are impure desires deep down in me. I am able to keep out such thoughts during waking hours. But what is present in the body like some hidden poison, always makes its way, even forcibly sometimes. I feel unhappy about this, but am not nervously afraid. I am always vigilant. I can suppress the enemy but have not been able to expel him altogether. If I am truthful, I shall succeed in doing that too. The enemy will not be able to endure the power of truth. If you are in the same condition as I am, learn from my experience. In its essence, desire for sex-pleasure is equally impure, whether its object is one's wife or some other woman. Its results differ. At the moment, we are thinking of the enemy in his essential nature. Understand, therefore, that so far as one's wife is concerned you are not likely to find anyone as lustful as I was. That is why I have described my pitiable condition to you and tried to give you courage. If Ba is as a mother to me now, this is the result of long struggle and God's grace. The legacy of that unclean life, however, afflicts me. I, in return, try to overcome it and, with God's grace, shall overcome it in this very life.

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

262. *LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN*

BOLGARH,
Silence Day, December 12, 1927

SISTERS,

There is profound solitude around me, but it is the solitude of a sick man's room. When I see the state of people here my heart burns within me, and I very much long to stay on here. If any of you is willing to come here, I would invite her to do so. All the women here observe *purdah*. The people have neither enough clothes to wear nor food to eat. When Mirabehn suggested, before I went to Orissa, that it was our duty to put on still fewer clothes, I felt embarrassed. But when I see things here, I feel that her suggestion was indeed proper. Women here put on only one dhoti, one half covers the lower part, and the other half the upper part of their bodies. They get neither milk nor ghee.

They are terror-stricken. Because of some policeman's threat, they do not even come anywhere near me. I left Mirabehn in a house and went out; immediately about fifty women surrounded her and began to ask her questions. If someone of you is willing to work here among these women, she can, I am sure, do a great deal. But all this is about the future. For the present, all of you should get fully trained. 'Training' means forgetting oneself. If you do that, you can then go anywhere you like.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3680

263. LETTER TO RAMESHCHANDRA

ON TOUR,
December 13, 1927

BHAI RAMESHCHANDRAJI,

I preserved your letter till now in the hope of answering it. Only today can I do so.

Eating flesh and eating vegetables both involve violence but without the latter man can survive nowhere, while without the former he can ordinarily survive anywhere. If sensitivity to pain differs among creatures, the pain experienced by a cow in the throes of death cannot be experienced by plants. For all living beings, violence in some form is unavoidable. The votary of non-violence will commit the minimum of violence. The other religions do not enjoin flesh-eating; they just do not forbid it. It is well to know the custom in the other religions or even in Hindu dharma, but if our reason considers vegetarianism superior from the moral point of view, we must accept it. The votary of non-violence will progressively restrict himself, even in the use of vegetables. It is difficult, not impossible, to remain a vegetarian in places like Greenland. Even if proved impossible, it cannot establish the necessity of flesh-eating everywhere. Though our acts are seldom without a fault, we abstain from many on the basis of comparative merit. Abstinence is constantly on the increase in the life of a seeker after *moksha*, and it is essential too.

Eggs and milk differ. Eggs are not essential. Milk too is not essential for crores of people. I have eaten eggs in England under a delusion, as I ate meat in India. But on coming to my senses I left them and even in the company of vegetarian friends I accepted

only those dishes that did not contain eggs. I have now come to know that a great number of unfertilized eggs are laid. This can be systematically checked and generally unfertilized eggs alone are eaten. But this cannot make eggs an item of our food.

Non-violence is a comprehensive dharma. Violence does not consist only in taking life away from the body. Abandoning *brahmacharya* too is violence in my eyes. It is well known that a *brahmachari* must abstain from flesh-diet, eggs and milk too. *Brahmacharya* is more easily attainable with vegetable diet alone.

In conclusion, though the question of diet is very important for a religious man, yet it is not the be-all and end-all of religion or non-violence; nor is it the most vital factor. The observance of religion and non-violence has more to do with the heart. He who does not feel the necessity of abstaining from meat for inner purification need not abstain from it.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6279

264. TELEGRAM TO SAKARCHAND

BALASORE,
December 14, 1927

SAKARCHAND SHETH
KENILWORTH COLLEGE
PANCHGANI

HOPE YOU ARE BETTER. WRITING. GOD BLESS YOU.

GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 7159

265. *LETTER TO CAPTAIN J. W. PETAVEL*

(CAMP) BALASORE,
December 14, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter written on the train. It is pathetic, for, though I believe that I have a most accommodating temperament, I see vital differences between us, where you seem to say only differences in mere matters of detail. Our outlooks appear to me to be wholly different. Whereas you have before your mind's eye that microscopic minority, the educated Indian, I have before my mind's eye the lowliest illiterate India living outside the railway beat. Important as the former class undoubtedly is, it has no importance in my estimation except in terms of the latter and for the sake of the latter. The educated class can justify its existence only if it is willing to sacrifice itself for the mass. Your scheme therefore makes no appeal to me. I have read Sir P. C. Ray's preface and I have read the other writings you have been sending me; but though I admire these great men, they cannot move me from my fundamental position. I want you therefore to recognize the fundamental difference between us and love me in spite of that difference if you can. For my part, the existence of that difference does not prevent me from loving you and therefore writing to you as often as I can in reply to your communications and striving to make clear the differences between our temperaments so that we may quickly agree to differ and hope one day that one or the other will become a convert.

Yours sincerely,

CAPTAIN J. W. PETAVEL
BAGHBAZAAR
CALCUTTA

From a photostat: S.N. 12648

266. INDICTMENT

Do you agree that it is the primary duty of an ideal Government and more so of a Great Soul to put down the wicked and to protect the righteous? If so, may we know how your political philosophy is consistent with this age-long dictum? Was not this the keynote of Shri Krishna's preaching to Arjuna on the battle-field of Kurukshetra?

Was this not the shrewd policy of the avataras[1], that brought about the dethronement of the renowned Bali, the destruction of Vali, and the annihilation of Jarasandha?

How can you expect ordinary mortals, and that too large numbers at a time, to withstand the attacks of unscrupulous enemies without retaliation? In view of the above, are we not justified in considering your emotional preachings and teachings as impracticable and not within the realization of ordinary persons? Your temporary and piecemeal success in South Africa had been exaggerated greatly by your admirers, and the Indians of average intelligence, innocently (sheep-like) following your lead, have been entangled in difficulties, not realizing that the parallel of South Africa does not hold good in the case of a vast country of different languages and religious sections like India. Have you not yourself realized, at the cost of the life-interests of a large number of young patriots, that all your talk of "swaraj within a year" has proved vainglorious? Don't you admit that your somersault[2] in the Bardoli[3] affair caused much havoc to the people of Guntur who boldly and manfully withheld payment of taxes for a considerable period,[4] in pursuance of your programme?

May we know the net result of your participation in the Khilafat agitation and the consequent playing of the Congress into the hands of a few fanatical Mussalmans? Has not the Hindu-Muslim unity of which you spoke and wrote so much, and in the name of which you appealed to all Hindus to join their Mohammedan brethren in the hour of their trial, proved a veritable castle of cards, the moment the need of the Mohammedans was over? Can you ever expect by your pious teachings to bring about any real unity between the bigoted and brave Mohammedans and caste-ridden and timid Hindus? Have you ever

[1] Vaman, Rama and Krishna

[2] *Vide* Vol. XIX, pp. 159-62 and Appendix I.

[3] That is, suspension of satyagraha in Bardoli on February 12, 1922; *vide* Vol. XXII, pp. 377-81.

[4] *Vide* Vol. XXII, p. 376.

realized the fact that the communal feuds are increasing all the more, ever since you came into prominence in the Congress by virtue of your creed of non-violence?

Will you not admit that Pandit Malaviya, C. R. Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, Vijayaraghavachariar, Kelkar, Dr. Moonje and other All-India leaders were disgusted with your political philosophy, however much it might be garbed in the language of dharma?

Have you not recognized the leadership of that great soul Tilak at least at the beginning? But how is it, you are today raking up intricate controversies of a social and religious character, to the detriment of the national cause? Do you not realize that these tend only to accentuate dissensions all the more among the docile Hindus? Are you not thereby indirectly playing into the hands of the enemies of our cause, whose one argument against us is that we are socially unfit for political freedom?

Is it worthy on your part to set up and encourage *Panchamas* to enter the holy temples of caste Hindus for whom and by whom they were built exclusively? Do you consider yourself to be a Trinetra (God Rudra) to set at naught those time-honoured customs at one stroke? Recently, we are surprised to note that you have taken up the cause of widows and boldly advised immature youths to marry widows. Don't you consider that Swami Vivekananda and others were prudent enough not to advocate widow marriage as they realized the difficulties which confront us even in the case of the marriages of maids, as they are taking place today? May we know how far it will help to create harmony by mixing up such highly controversial problems with the question of swaraj which is purely political and on which all of us are expected to make a united stand?

Your charkha cannot be popularized in this advanced age of science. Don't you think that you will do well, in the light of practical experience, to confine your activities to the field of labour organizations?

As a real believer in ahimsa dharma is it not your clear duty to refuse addresses from municipalities which are harbouring slaughter-houses?

The foregoing is a condensation of a letter sent to me by a correspondent while I was in Berhampur. As I have reason to think that the correspondent has boldly voiced what many are harbouring in their breasts, I feel that the indictment deserves an answer.

It is hardly necessary to answer the questions in detail. Many of us make the very serious mistake of taking literally what is accepted as scriptures, forgetting that the letter killeth and the spirit giveth life. The *Mahabharata* and the Puranas are neither history nor simple religious maxims. They appear to me to be wonderfully designed to illustrate the religious history of man

in a variety of ways. The heroes described therein are all imperfect mortals, even as we are—the difference being one of degree only. Their alleged actions are not infallible guides for us. The *Mahabharata* sums up its teachings by declaring emphatically that truth outweighs everything else on earth.

But I do not seek to justify everything written under the name of scriptures. I take, as all to be true must take, the sum-total of the effect produced on me by a prayerful reading of such books. Thus I hold that my belief in truth and non-violence is derived from and based on the scriptural teaching of the very books from which the correspondent presents me with conundrums. Nay more, my belief today having become part of my fundamental being is capable of standing independent of these books or any other Surely there must come a time in the life of a very religiously-minded man when his faith must be self-sustained. Whatever therefore the avataras may be proved to have done or not done is of little moment to me. My experience daily growing stronger and richer tells me that there is no peace for individuals or for nations without practising truth and non-violence to the uttermost extent possible for man. The policy of retaliation has never succeeded. We must not be confounded by the isolated illustrations of retaliation, including frauds and force, having attained temporary and seeming success. The world lives because there is more love than hate, more truth than untruth in it. This is a proposition capable of being verified by everyone who will take the trouble to think. Fraud and force are diseases, truth and non-violence is health. The fact that the world has not perished is an ocular demonstration of the fact that there is more health than disease in it. Let us, then, who realize this, live up to the rules of health even in the midst of circumstances the most adverse.

My preaching and teaching are not emotional or unpractical, for I teach what is ancient and strive to practise what I preach. And I claim that what I practise is capable of being practised by all, because I am a very ordinary mortal open to the same temptations and liable to the same weaknesses as the least among us.

The success in South Africa was complete according to the standard then aimed at. And what is true of small groups must be true of larger groups with correspondingly larger effort of the same types.

I have faith enough in my method to be able to prophesy that posterity will consider the years 1920 and 1921 as among the most brilliant in the pages of India's history, and among them the

Bardoli 'somersault' the most brilliant of all. The Bardoli decision has enabled India to look the world square in the face and to hold up her head. With her creed in the Congress constitution, it was the only correct, bold and honourable course for the nation to take. The battle for swaraj was no camouflage. And if any suffered involuntarily, they suffered because they played with fire.

The participation in the Khilafat agitation has made both the parties strong and has resulted in a mass awakening which would have otherwise taken ages. If real unity is to come, it will come only by a due adherence to my teachings. The present Hindu-Muslim feuds and inter-Hindu feuds and even inter-Muslim feuds are a sign of the mass awakening. What we see happening today is nothing but the coming of dirt to the surface in the process of purification. Let the correspondent watch the process going on in a sugar refinery, and he will understand my meaning. This froth in the shape of feuds has come to the surface only to be thrown out in the end.

I am unaware of the fact that Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji and the other leaders mentioned by the correspondent are disgusted with my political philosophy. Of some at least I know to the contrary. But even if they are disgusted I hope that my faith will stand the strain of the disgust of all the friends whose opinion I have learnt to value and cherish.

The correspondent betrays his ignorance of the Lokamanya when he imputes to him policies which I know he was never guilty of. I know that there were fundamental differences between us but not what the correspondent imagines. What we should learn from our heroes is not a slavish imitation of their actions which we may not know or understand. We need to assimilate their bravery, their great self-sacrifice, their equally great industry, their love of their country and a steady pursuit of their own ideals. We make fatal blunders when without relevance or without adequate knowledge we copy their isolated actions.

I hold that without the social reforms that I am advocating, thank God, in common with many of our distinguished countrymen, Hinduism is in danger of perishing.

The charkha is making steady progress in spite of the correspondent's unbelief. The charkha work is my contribution to the ocean of labour.

When I receive addresses from municipalities, I claim to remain untouched by the slaughter in the municipal slaughter-houses. On the contrary, their addresses give me an opportunity of preaching my doctrines to them, and I am happy to say that

they never resent them and some of them even adopt the suggestions I humbly place before them.

Young India, 15-12-1927

267. LETTER TO H. A. J. GIDNEY

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 15, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I had your letter[1]. I have not any time at my disposal to send you a long message, but this I can say.

The present and the future policy of the Anglo-Indian community should be not to strive for recognition as Europeans, but strive to make common cause with India's masses to whom they owe everything. The fact of European blood should be treated as a handicap and turned to good account not by aping the superficial veneer of Europe, but by striving to assimilate the good qualities of the Europeans and sharing them with the masses. The attempt on the part of some Anglo-Indians to treat themselves as a class apart and wrest special privileges will be found in the end to be vain and inglorious.

Yours sincerely,

Lt. Col. H. A. J. Gidney
Calcutta

From a photostat: S.N. 12639

[1] Dated 25-11-1927; the addressee had asked for a message for the Christmas issue of the *Anglo-Indian Review*.

268. LETTER TO I. SANYASA RAZU AND OTHERS

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 15, 1927

Dear Friend,

I have secured from Deshbhakta Venkatappayya the names of these Andhra friends who gave proper legal guarantees for the moneys advanced by the Khadi Board, now Charkha Sangh, for khadi work. I understand that you are one of these guarantors and that there is difficulty in securing payment from you. I would make a fervent appeal to you to discharge your obligation which is not merely legal but also moral. And we who profess to serve the country are in my opinion more bound by moral obligations even than by those that are merely legal. I therefore hope that you will discharge this obligation as if it was a first charge upon all your assets and induce other friends to discharge their responsibility.

Yours sincerely,

(1) Ivvaturi Sanyasa Razu, Devadi
(2) Gadey Rajamannar, Berhampur
(3) Unnava Ramalingam Pantulu, Municipal Chairman, Berhampur
(4) Malladi Krishnamoorthy Pantulu, Vakil, Berhampur
(5) Thakur Ramakrishnarao (Now gone to Kashi)[1]

From a microfilm: S.N. 12649

[1] Letter was not sent to him.

269. *LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT*

BALASORE,
December 16, 1927

You acted very wisely in opening your heart before Jamnalalji, Maganlal and others. A person who has realized his or her own error, has changed into a new body, why should he or she feel ashamed of talking about the old one? Even sin is a disease. Conversely, every disease is a sin. You may feel embarrassment in talking about your mental appendicitis if I feel it in talking about my appendicitis. Yes, of course, so long as we cling to the disease we shall feel shame, embarrassment and remorse. But, just as the body feels light after the cause of the disease has been expelled with an operation, so too should the mind.

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

270. *LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA*

December 16, 1927

BHAISHRI KHAMBHATTA,

Since Shri Govindji Cheda is under your charge, I do not worry about him. Kindly write from time to time, and tell me what Dr. Jivraj Mehta says, who is to perform the operation, etc.

You must have recovered by now.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

[PS.]

18-21 Cuttack
23 Madras

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 5011. Courtesy: Tehmina Khambhatta

271. ARTICLES ON COW-PROTECTION

Some readers have made a request that articles written by Shri Valji Desai on cow-protection, in Gujarati in the *Navajivan* and in English in *Young India*, may be published in book form. Shri Rameshwardas of Dhulia has promised to contribute Rs. 35 towards the expense. It is doubtful whether the book would fetch the cost of publication; hence it could be published only if other cow-lovers contribute towards the cost. It is not possible for the *Navajivan* to undertake this venture without others' help. The funds at the disposal of the All-India Cow-protection Association are not sufficient to meet the expenses of its constructive activities; hence, I do not dare to meet the deficit out of these funds. The book will be published immediately if readers send in small contributions. If any profit is left over, it will be handed over to the *Gorakshamandal*[1]. The book will be brought out in Gujarati, English and Hindi, depending on the help that is received.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 18-12-1927

272. LETTER TO P. THIRUKOOTASUNDARAM PILLAY

CUTTACK,
December 18, 1927

MY DEAR THIRUKOOTASUNDARAM,

I received your letter[2] when I was about to finish the Ceylon visit. I could not reply to you earlier as your letter was mislaid and therefore escaped my attention. I have made full enquiry into the matter and I have come to the conclusion that Sjt. Varadachari counted the purse as soon as it was humanly possible. In rapid tours, it is not possible to count purses in the presence of donors or even during the night of the day on which the purses are

[1] All-India Cow-protection Association

[2] The addressee had drawn Gandhiji's attention to a deficiency of Rs. 2,000 in the Palamcottah purse and requested him to make enquiries (S.N. 12640).

received. The donors give purses only when they have full confidence in the integrity of the donees and their ability to choose honest instruments for their keep as well as disposal. This is not the first time that the purses have been found to contain less than the amounts announced, and the deficiencies occur often without any fault of the persons who keep the purses before they find themselves into the hands of the donees. All the consolation therefore that I can give you is that you should not agitate yourself over the deficiency. It means no reflection on you, nor should it carry any reflection upon those who are associated with me in the conduct of the khadi organization.

Sjt. Varadachari is one of the most trusted amongst khadi workers and I assure you that you have no reason whatsoever to suspect his honesty or doubt his diligence. I had not known a more diligent and honest worker in the All-India Spinners' Association. He tells me that he did count the purse at Palamcottah, but you were not available after he had counted the purse. There is evidently therefore some misunderstanding regarding the date of counting as understood by Sjt. Viswanatha Pillay. And if you are still not satisfied, you may see me whilst I am in Madras and I shall try to give you a few minutes.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. P. THIRUKOOTASUNDARAM PILLAY
SINDUPOONDURAI
TINNEVELLY

From a microfilm: S.N. 12640A

273. LETTER TO GOPARAJU SATYANARAYANA MURTHI

AS AT THE ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
December 19, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I cannot give you anything better than Ramanama. Each time you have the fear of ghosts creeping over you, you must think of Rama and they will disperse like mist before the sun. If I were you, I should not give to an able-bodied beggar whether he is a Brahmin or what not. If your body permits it, a cold bath early in the morning even in winter is a nice

thing. I see no harm in cycling for a good purpose. If you want to go to the Ashram, you should write to the Secretary.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. GOPARAJU SATYANARAYANA MURTHI
VARAHAGIRI HOUSE
BERHAMPUR

From a photostat: G.N. 6090

274. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

CUTTACK,[1]
December 19, 1927

MY DEAR REHANA,

I have your letter. I must dictate today. This is being dictated in a jolting train which is taking us to Cuttack.

I know you are capable of living down Hindu prejudices. The poor servants know no better. I suppose the bitterness that you noticed amongst Mohammedan sisters is not absent amongst Hindu sisters of the same type. Your account of the unsuccessful attempts of these sisters to help themselves is very good, very funny and painful. How the riches spoil so many of us.

I hope the peeled potato was none the worse for the strain you put upon the poor thing. I am glad you have got over the 'blues'. You know that as a reader of the *Gita*, you have no business to have them at all.

With love,

BAPU

MISS RAIHANA TYABJI
C/o LALA RAGHUBIR SINGH
KASHMIRI GATE, DELHI

From a photostat: S.N. 9606

[1] The letter, which was dictated in the train which took Gandhiji to Cuttack, was probably typed and signed on this date.

275. LETTER TO S. HANDY PERINBANAYAGAM

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 19, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I am glad of the enthusiasm for khadi. The only way you will keep it up is to work it in a thoroughly efficient business-like manner, and for this purpose, you must have someone who is an expert in all the processes. You have in Colombo Sjt. Jairamdas Jayavardana. If you want to train more workers, perhaps Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar will be able to take one or two at his Ashram at Tiruchengodu. I know that you will not allow the enthusiasm to die out on any account.

Yours sincerely,

Sjt. Handy Perinbanayagam
Jaffna College
Vaddukkoddai
Ceylon

From a microfilm: S.N. 12622

276. LETTER TO K. S. KARANTH

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 19, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. Of course if you wish to publish your book, there is no harm. Perhaps my own experience is that it is better to wait for publishing such books till one has obtained greater and more accurate experience.

Your reference to different kinds of *asanas*[1] seem to me to have been taken from various books. I have been in correspondence with the writers of such books and I have found that whatever they have written is not capable of being borne out fully either by their own experience or the experience of others

[1] Yogic postures

on whom one can rely. But if you have confidence in what you have written, I have no desire to dissuade you from publishing the book. If *asana* and *pranayamas*[1] are really efficacious as they are claimed to be, why don't you give them a thorough trial yourself? I intended to do so myself but experts themselves dissuaded me owing to my illness.

I see no inconsistency between advocating *brahmacharya* and widow remarriage at the same time so long as I do not do so in connection with the same persons. Whilst I would like all young men to be and remain *brahmacharis*, I did not hesitate to advocate, countenance and even officiate at marriages of those who find it impossible to practise self-restraint. Of course when I advocate the marriage of child widows, I presume that they want the pleasure which all animals seek and some human beings only can restrain themselves from seeking. *Brahmacharya* is not a thing that can be superimposed, and it is sinful to *compel* child widows to remain unmarried.

If the fallen sisters to whom you refer will not mind marrying a person belonging to any caste, there should be no difficulty and they ought not to object to any caste. My asking them to observe celibacy, if they cannot secure a proper match, has a meaning. That is to say, if they will restrict themselves to a caste or a province, and yet lead a pure life, naturally they must observe celibacy or they must accept any person of any character.

You may publish a translation of *Self-restraint* v. *Self-indulgence*. But please ask the Manager of *Navajivan* before you do so lest he might have given the permission to somebody.

I do not know what you wrote about Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. In spite of your information, it would not be wrong to say that he was an embodiment of ahimsa. He believed in that dharma and tried to follow it to the best of his lights. That he did something which to us today with our fuller experience appears to be repugnant to the doctrine of ahimsa, does not take away from the merit of Ramakrishna inasmuch as he could not think out of the custom prevalent around him, so far as food was concerned. It is not[2] possible that future generations will condemn the eating of cooked food as contrary to ahimsa and yet the existing authorities of ahimsa will not be liable to condemnation for not having discovered the inconsistency of eating cooked food. No person is able to practise completest ahimsa. Possession

[1] Breathing exercises

[2] Perhaps "not" was a slip.

of a material frame involves a certain amount of unavoidable *himsa*. A votary of ahimsa therefore continually strives to reduce the extent of *himsa* to a minimum.

Please tell me if you want me to return the manuscript of your book.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. S. KARANTH
C/o, K. S. ACHARLU, M. A.
TEACHER, DAVANGERE

From a microfilm: S.N. 12652

277. LETTER TO OLIVE DOKE

AS AT THE ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
December 19, 1927

MY DEAR OLIVE,

I was delighted to hear from Miss Schlesin all about the family and your exploits. Now I would like to shake hands with Clement who is now Dr. Clement and to hear you singing to me "Lead Kindly Light". You may not remember the scene, I do and I could paint it if I was a painter, so vivid is the recollection of that scene.[1]

Your venturing out in the wilds of Africa does not appear at all strange to me, for, I should expect nothing less from Joseph Doke's children.

You must forgive this dictated letter. I had to choose between postponing writing to you and dictating. I have made a better choice. Please write to me occasionally.[2]

My love to you all,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 9227. Courtesy: C. M. Doke

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXIX, pp. 139-40.

[2] The addressee acknowledged this letter on March 2, 1928 (S.N. 11968).

278. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

CUTTACK,
Silence Day [*December 19, 1927*][1]

SISTERS,

God willing, there will be only one more Monday for me to write to you.

I have received Manibehn's letter. You suggest that I should discuss the question of dress in greater detail. I shall not do so now, but you may reopen the point when we meet. As long as we retain an attraction for fineries in the deepest recesses of our heart, it is useless to give up wearing them or adopt any other change just to imitate others who have given them up. But if our infatuation for fineries passes off, and still the mind is drawn towards them, then we should make the necessary outward changes, whether through a sense of shame or by way of imitation of others, and ultimately root out this craving. Infatuation and things like that are our enemies; they harass us so much that we should protect ourselves against them with help secured from every possible quarter. I am writing all this for those who are honest and sincere. The *Gita* says somewhere that those who deny themselves pleasures and crave for them in their hearts, are foolish and deceitful. This refers to the hypocrite. To those who are really honest and sincere, the *Gita* says that they should constantly control the passions that agitate them.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3674

[1] From the discussion about dress and finery; also from Gandhiji's being in Cuttack on this date

279. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

Silence Day [December 19][1] *1927*

CHI. NARANDAS,

Read the accompanying letter and reply to it, send it on afterwards to Shri Fulchand and request him to reply to it. He should send to me the original letter too, so that I may reply to it. Address the reply to me at Madras.

Purushottam must have completely recovered now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 7713. Courtesy: Radhabehn Chaudhri

280. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

CUTTACK,
December 20, 1927

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

These papers are for you to read and consider and to tell me whether there is anything in the suggestion.

Though the doctors say that the blood-pressure is high, I notice no effects of it. And three doctors and three instruments gave different readings yester-day—200, 180, 160! What is one to do when doctors differ? Anyway you should not be anxious.

Love,

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2626

[1] In 1927 Gandhiji reached Madras on December 23.

281. LETTER TO M. FRANCES H. LUKE

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 20, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter[1]. I cannot think of anything better than that you should attach yourself to some hospital where you could easily come in contact with those whom you have in view.

I remember your visit to the Ashram. I am travelling just now and I have no photograph such as you want. You may not know that I never was photographed, but of course there are many snapshots available in the bazaar.

Yours sincerely,

M. Frances H. Luke
The Matron's Office
St. Thomas's Hospital, S.E.1.
London

From a photostat : S.N. 12554

282. LETTER TO S. N. GHOSE

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 20, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I am asking the Manager of *Young India* to put you under free list.

I do not write anything about your fight there because I am at sea myself as to what can be done. If you are a regular reader of *Young India* you must have noticed that I do not write an idle word. I feel so helpless about many things and therefore

[1] Dated 26-9-1927; the addressee, an educated Englishwoman, had stated that she wanted to serve the downtrodden and the untouchables.

leave them. Believe me that it is not due to want of desire to help that I do not write.

Yours sincerely,

S. N. GHOSE, ESQ.
THE INDIA FREEDOM FOUNDATION
799, BROADWAY, NEW YORK (U.S.A.)

From a photostat: S.N. 12555

283. LETTER TO HELENE HAUSSDING

CUTTACK,
(ORISSA)
December 20, 1927

I have your letters which have remained unanswered owing to the constant tour in which I have been engaged. Nor have I much time to say anything useful beyond telling you that somehow or other I am still holding on though doctors tell me that my blood-pressure is rising. I hope to reach the Ashram early next year. I expect to hear from you any day that you have now thrown into the Danube all the weakness of the flesh that you took away from India and that your chirp is as vigorous as it was before you reached this land of sorrows.

MISS HELENE HAUSSDING
HERRSCHING A. AMMERSEE
BEI MINCHEN (GERMANY)

From a photostat: S.N. 12556

284. TALKS TO KHADI WORKERS, CUTTACK[1]

December 20, 1927

I

The directors should be as vigilant and as jealous of the interests of their concern as the directors of the Bank of England, one of the greatest co-operative corporations in the world. But they have to be even more unselfish than they, inasmuch as the khadi company was not for exploitation, but for service of the poorest in the land. Their ability lay in attention to the most minor details in mastering the science of spinning. It is impossible for them to achieve any result unless they were expert spinners and expert organizers.

Some of the questions you have asked showed how unpractical you are. Some of you want to know if I would have you put on loin-cloth and to have a particular diet. Well, I have no desire to regulate either your dress or diet. What I want you to do is to realize the spirit of the movement and shape your life accordingly.

To you who want to serve Orissa I say, make Orissa a khadi depot for the whole of India. And you cannot do so until all the spirit of rivalry goes out and all concentrate on production. There can be no rivalry between khadi and khadi. I can understand your objection to khadi from other provinces, but you should make no distinction between khadi produced in different parts of Orissa. Concentrate on unifying your efforts and co-ordinating your sales.

I heard the other day some young men talking of the development of agriculture. If someone can prove to me that it is practicable and for the millions we have in view now, and can keep all the impoverished population from poverty and want, I will change my opinion about spinning. But I warn you in the present conditions you will not be successful. I have been working to build a model farm. There are foolish friends to en-

[1] These talks were delivered on 18th, 19th and 20th December, 1927. They are here reproduced under the date of the last talk. Mahadev Desai says about these talks: "Advice to those who wanted to run a khadi joint-stock company was on the lines to the Rajapalayam merchants"; *vide* "Speech at Khadi Vastralaya, Rajapalayam", 4-10-1927.

trust me with money to indulge in experiment, and I squander money on them. I had a talk with the late Sir Ganga Ram and supplied him with all the information about my lands, but he could not present me with a ready-made workable plan to improve our agriculture. I ask you to go to the villages and bury yourselves there, not as their masters or benefactors, but as their humble servants. Let them know what to do and how to change their modes of living from your daily conduct and way of living. Only feeling will be of no use just like steam which by itself is of no account unless it is kept under proper control when it becomes a mighty force. I ask you to go forth as messengers of God carrying balm for the wounded soul of India.

II

Do not be troubled by the question of the disposal of your production. I could, if need be, disengage you from the obligation of selling. Go on producing as much as you can. There cannot be a better field for the production of khaddar than Orissa. Only Orissa can make khaddar a proved proposition. Intuitively of course it was a proved proposition to me in 1908, but you should demonstrate it practically. Show to the world that you cannot exist without khadi. Don't derive your faith from me, but derive it from yourselves and then refuse to be moved even if Gandhi changes his faith. Show to the people that they must work if they want more food, and the work can be none else than you can give them and on your terms. Remember that you cannot go on indefinitely relying merely on the patriotism of the people. You must produce khadi which is in quality superior to any other cloth.

I ask you to remember that unless the people understand that khadi is their only salvation, unless they feel that they cannot be without khadi, you cannot succeed. Mind you, I am not conducting this campaign to bring about a boycott of foreign cloth for its own sake. It is a necessary condition of our living, and an incident of our producing our own cloth if we must live.

Go then to the villages and become villagers. The story that the schoolmaster revealed at Charbatia was an eye-opener. It was a typical village. What a field of operation he has! You can take charge of the village school, make the children flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone and work amongst the villagers through the children. You will enter into their sorrows, ask them why they send their men to those pestilential hovels in Calcutta instead of working for their bread in their own homes. Go and

get into their homes, handle their wheels, their carding-bows, show them their defects, see how they live, teach them the elementary principles of sanitation. It is this spinning of a constructive type that can bring swaraj and it is in this land that the charkha can sing its finest music. Make every village self-contained, make every home produce and use its own khadi, and as for the surplus khadi, take a written guarantee from me to sell it all if it is of standard quality. Remember that only that worker will be worth his salt who makes the village he lives in self-reliant. The upshot of it all is the personal equation. No learning is necessary, except learning in the school of love. Have we workers honest, true, defiant, and burning with love of the country?

III

One word, that I would like to leave with you, doubly afflicted people of this afflicted land, is that you will lose yourselves in the ocean of the submerged humanity about you. Because it is submerged, the problem is simple. The way is straight, even though it is narrow. And you must treat it in the right and prayerful spirit. We have been praying here for three days. Prayer brings a peace, a strength and a consolation that nothing else can give. But it must be offered from the heart. When it is not offered from the heart, it is like the beating of a drum, or just the vocal effect of the throat sounds. When it is offered from the heart, it has the power to melt mountains of misery. Those who want are welcome to try its power.

Young India, 29-12-1927

285. LETTER TO DEVI WEST

AS AT THE ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
December 21, 1927

I have your letter[1]. The floods[2] have indeed made a terrible havoc, but it has also brought to the fore the best qualities of the people afflicted. An organization grew up all of a sudden which battled with the calamity with great decision and equally great success.

[1] Dated 2-10-1927; the addressee had written to Gandhiji on his birthday.
[2] In Gujarat in July 1927; *vide* Vol. XXXIV.

Miss Schlesin has been of late writing to me regularly, and of course she is as mad and as good as ever. Albert[1] never writes nowadays. I did however get accounts of him and know that he and his are doing very well indeed. Manilal and his wife have been writing to me regularly.

I am keeping fairly well. Perhaps I shall never regain the original health, but I am thankful for whatever strength God has yet left me.

I hope you are getting *Young India* as also *Indian Opinion* regularly. If not, please let me know. Prabhudas is now much better. He is at a hill station with his father. The others whom you know are doing well. If you are photographed do send me one. I am sure all at the Ashram who know you and love you well, love to see you in the spirit if they cannot see you in the flesh. I have had a strenuous tour in the south of India including Ceylon as you must have seen. I hope now to reach the Ashram on or before new-year's day.

Yours,

MISS DEVI WEST
23, GEORGE STREET
LOUTH, LINCS

From a photostat: S.N. 12543

286. LETTER TO NIRMAL CHANDRA DEY

AS AT THE ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
December 21, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I can quite see that unless you have a living faith in God you cannot get rid of sinful thoughts much less sinful acts. The only way I can commend to you to have that belief is to realize man's littleness and therefore your own and persist in believing. . .[2] assuming that there must be a 'Being' who is perfect and who is responsible for the wonderful phenomenon, the world.

I have no capacity to argue with you about the origin of evil. It is enough for me humbly to recognize evil as evil and

[1] A. W. West, addressee's brother

[2] The source has a blank here.

strive to combat it. For, I know that God in Whom I believe helps me always in the combat. Victory lies in striving. To find honestly a guru and the striving necessitates the living of a pure life.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. NIRMAL CHANDRA DEY
ENGINEERING COLLEGE HOSTEL, SHIBPUR
P.O. BOTANICAL GARDEN
HOWRAH

From a microfilm: S.N. 12653 A

287. *LETTER TO VISHWAMBHAR SAHAI*

AS AT THE ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
December 21, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I am sorry I am able to reach your letter only today. So far as my recollection serves me right, I have not given anyone any exclusive right to publish a translation of my *Guide to Health*[1] in Hindi or Urdu. I am aware that many people have published translations of that book both in India and in Europe. You should ask Messrs N. D. Saighal & Sons, Lahore, to show you my authority and if any such authority is produced to you, please send me a copy for my verification.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. VISHWAMBHAR SAHAI
PREM SAHITYA BHANDAR
MEERUT

From a microfilm: S. N. 12654

[1] An English translation of a series of Gujarati articles on general knowledge about health published in *Indian Opinion* from January 4, 1913 to August 16, 1913; *vide* Vols. XI and XII.

288. LETTER TO DEVICHAND

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 21, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I am sorry I have not been able to reply to your letter earlier. Your enquiry is quite pertinent. The money that I collect or is sent to me for khadi must be spent on khadi, unless I may commit a breach of trust. But I do collect and receive moneys for untouchables which are used only for their uplift. I collect moneys in this manner for activities which are controlled by me directly or indirectly.

Yours sincerely,

Sjt. Devichand
President, Dayanand Dalit Uddhar Mandal
Hoshiarpur, Punjab

From a microfilm: S.N. 12655

289. LETTER TO MANINDRA CHANDRA ROY

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 21, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have been unable to deal with your letter earlier. I cannot help feeling that your judgement is warped according to your reasoning that there should be no effort on the part of mankind for self-improvement. A prisoner who is innocently convicted you would say should not try to secure his release. I see no distinction between a helpless innocent girl being given away in bondage to a person whom she has never known and a prisoner. Your arguments seem to be on a par with the first.

Yours sincerely,

Sjt. Manindra Chandra Roy
Head Master
Berhampur National School
Berhampur, P. O. Khagra

From a microfilm: S.N. 12656

290. LETTER TO T. K. RAMUNNI MENON

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 21, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I am sorry I have not been able to reply to your letter earlier.

I would like you, if you can, to see me whilst I am in Madras. I do not want you hastily to throw up the job that you have.

Yours sincerely,

Sjt. T. K. Ramunni Menon
Co-operative Officer
Post Puthiyara
(Malabar)

From a microfilm: S.N. 12657

291. LETTER TO PEAREYLAL

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 21, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have not been able to deal with your letter earlier. I do not think you need a scheme so much as proper workers, and since you have Miss Gmeiner and Babu Jugal Kishore, I think you cannot do better than be guided by them. One mistake I would ask you to guard yourself against, namely, making the Widows Home a mere literary school where widows will have everything done for them. I should give the widows some industrial training and make them self-reliant and ultimately self-supporting. I shall also guard against making them sectional.

Yours sincerely,

Peareylal[1], Esq.
No. 2, Metcalf House Road
Delhi

From a microfilm: S.N. 12658

[1] Died in 1933; a philanthropist

292. OUR SHAME AND THEIR SHAME

The long deferred Orissa visit has come to fill the bitter cup of sorrow and humiliation. It was at Bolgarh, thirty-one miles from the nearest railway station, that whilst I was sitting and talking with Dinabandhu Andrews on the 11th instant, a man with a half-bent back wearing only a dirty loin-cloth came crouching in front of us. He picked up a straw and put it in his mouth and then lay flat on his face with arms outstretched and then raised himself, folded his hands, bowed, took out the straw, arranged it in his hair and was about to leave. I was writhing in agony whilst I witnessed the scene. Immediately the performance was finished, I shouted for an interpreter, asked the friend to come near and began to talk to him. He was an untouchable living in a village six miles away, and being in Bolgarh for the sale of his load of faggots and having heard of me had come to see me. Asked why he should have taken the straw in his mouth, he said that was to honour me. I hung my head in shame. The price of honour seemed to me to be too great to bear. My Hindu spirit was deeply wounded. I asked him for a gift. He searched for a copper about his waist. "I do not want your copper, but I want you to give me something better," I said. "I will give it," he replied. I had ascertained from him that he drank and ate carrion because it was custom.

"The gift I want you to give me is a promise never again to take the straw in your mouth for any person on earth, it is beneath man's dignity to do so; never again to drink because it reduces man to the condition of a beast, and never again to eat carrion, for it is against Hinduism and no civilized person would ever eat carrion."

"But my people will excommunicate me, if I do not drink and eat carrion," the poor man said.

"Then suffer excommunication and if need be leave the village."

This downtrodden humble man made the promise. If he keeps it, his threefold gift is more precious than the rupees that generous countrymen entrust to my care.

This untouchability is our greatest shame. The humiliation of it is sinking deeper.

But this never-to-be-forgotten incident was only part of the shame and sorrow. Never since the days of Champaran (in 1917)[1] have I witnessed such death-like quiet as I did on entering political Orissa through Banpur. And I fear that the quiet of Orissa is worse than that of Champaran. There was spirit in the ryots of Champaran after a few days' stay in their midst. I doubt if the Orissa ryot would respond so quickly. I was told that the zamindars, the rajas and the local police had conspired to frighten the ryots out of coming near me. I had begun to flatter myself with the belief that the rajas, the zamindars and the pettiest police officials had ceased to distrust or fear me. The experiences of Orissa have chastened me. Being too weak to go about much, I sent my friends among the people and ascertained the cause. They brought the news that people were told, on pain of punishment, not to come near me or to take part in any demonstration in my honour. Such warnings have been issued before and in other provinces, but they have had little or no effect in normal times such as these. The ryots in Orissa, however, seemed to me to be living in a perpetual state of fear and liable to be acted upon by the slightest attempt.

This is a shame both we and the foreign rulers have to share. It is true that the rajas and zamindars and the petty officials are our own kith and kin. But the primary source of fright is in the rulers. Their system is based on 'frightfulness'. In the name of prestige they have compelled somehow or other the tallest among us to bend low. They have intensified, where they have not created, demoralization. They have known the existence of abject fear among the ryots. But they have done nothing to remove it and the causes, where they have not hugged the condition of things in the alleged interest of their rule. Whilst therefore they may not be directly responsible for the pathetic scenes I witnessed, they cannot be acquitted of a considerable share of responsibility for them.

But our shame is greater. If we were strong, self-respecting and not susceptible to frightfulness, the foreign rulers would have been powerless for mischief. Those only who are susceptible to fear are frightened by others. And it has to be confessed that long before the British advent we were habituated to fear by our own zamindars and rajas. The present rulers have but reduced to a science what was in existence before in a more or less crude shape. The workers in Orissa have therefore to teach the ryot

[1] The source has "1916".

to shed the oppressive nervous timidity bordering on cowardice. And this they will not do by swearing at the zamindar, the raja or the police officials. These latter become docile and even friendly when they find that the ryot has unlearned the unmanly habit.

Young India, 22-12-1927

293. NOTHING TOO SMALL

A friend sends me for publication a charkha dialogue. I am not printing it as I have discovered no plot about the story, but I gladly publish the following instructive verses the writer has quoted and put into the mouth of a little girl telling her little brother that they should begin to work the charkha for the sake of the poor even though they were youngsters:

Suppose the little cowslip
    Should hang its golden cup,
And say, 'I'm such a tiny flower,
    'I'd better not grow up:'
How many a weary traveller
    Would miss its fragrant smell?
How many a little child would grieve
    To lose it from the dell?

Suppose the glistening dewdrop
    Upon the grass should say,
'What can a little dewdrop do?
    'I'd better roll away:'
The blade on which it rested,
    Before the day was done,
Without a drop to moisten it,
    Would wither in the sun.

Suppose the little breezes,
    Upon a summer's day,
Should think themselves too small to cool
    The traveller on his way:
Who would not miss the smallest
    And softest ones that blow,
And think they made a great mistake
    If they were talking so?

How many deeds of kindness
A little child may do;
Although it has so little strength
And little wisdom too.
It wants a loving spirit,
Much more than strength, to prove
How many things a child may do
For others by his love.

These beautiful verses apply equally to many of us grown-up people who talk no better than the little children in the imaginary story. We may not excuse ourselves from sacrificial spinning on the flimsy excuse that it is too little to be of use. Not for us thus to argue ourselves into laziness; ours is but to do our little best and leave to God to use it as He wills.

Young India, 22-12-1927

294. LETTER TO SUBHADRA TULJAPURKER

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 23, 1927

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

I was unable to reply to your letter[1] earlier. I congratulate you upon your being able to recite the whole of the *Gita* without a mistake and for having earned prize for the recitation. The best way to study the *Gita* apart from recitation is to take it verse by verse, understand its meaning fully and apply it in the working of one's own life. Some time when I come to Bombay, perhaps you would come and recite some of the chapters to me.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Subhadra Tuljapurker
N. P. Pathare's House
Near Portuguese Church
Dadar, Bombay

From a photostat: S.N. 12635 A

[1] Dated 6-10-1927; the addressee was aged 15 years.

295. LETTER TO ZAIBUNNISA

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 23, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I am sorry I have not been able to reply to your letter earlier. I have the information from the Ashram that your drama has been received. But as you might have noticed I have been continually on the move. Although I expect to reach the Ashram in January, I have no notion when I shall get the time to go through your manuscript. All therefore I can promise to you is that I shall try my best to deal with it as early as I can. But if you propose to have it printed, I would ask you not to wait for my opinion, but send it to the press, if friends like Maulana Mazharul Haq and Dr. Syed Mahomed approve of it.

Yours sincerely,

Begum Zaibunnisa[1]
C/o Syed Ahmad Ali Sahab
Mahalla, Sahebganj
Chapra

From a microfilm: S.N. 12637

296. LETTER TO PICHAPPA SUBRAMANIAM CHETTIAR

Madras,
December 23, 1927

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was delighted to hear from you the wedding for which you had to go away from me at Colombo had been duly celebrated. Please convey to the married couple my good wishes again and tell them that I expect them both to work for the service of the country.

Yes, the contributions from Ceylon were exceedingly good. I do not need to commend any particular thing to you, for I know that your whole heart is in khadi service which is the most

[1] A Muslim lady who wished to dedicate her Urdu play to Gandhiji

universal and practical service of the country at the present moment.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. PICHAPPA SUBRAMANIAM CHETTIAR
AMARAVATI PUDUR
GANDHI NAGAR
RAMNAD DT.

From a microfilm: S.N. 12659

297. *LETTER TO KAMALA DEVI*

AS AT THE ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
December 23, 1927

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I like your letter.[1] What you say about the girls and women of India is largely true. But you and other girls in your position can do a great deal in order to remove the bondage. If you are firm in your resolve and at the same time gentle, I am sure that your father will let you follow your own bent of mind. But in order to achieve the result, you must be patient. Live there the life of simplicity that you have pictured to yourself in the Ashram at Sabarmati. After all mind is the greatest factor. And if your mind is married to the idea of simplicity and purity no power on earth can divorce it from their idea.

I note what you say about your idea of necessaries of life. Do you want me to speak to your father and even correspond with him? You should not be afraid to talk to your father freely and give him your full confidence.

Yours sincerely,

SRIMATI KAMALA DEVI
AKHIL MISTRY LANE
CALCUTTA

From a microfilm; S.N. 12660

[1] Addressee's parents wanted her to marry, but she wished to go and stay at the Ashram. *Vide* also Vol. XXXIV, pp. 263 and 388-9.

298. LETTER TO S. G. DATAR

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 23, 1927

Dear Friend,

I have your letter and your communication on *shraddha*[1] and I have not published it because your viewpoint has been so often dealt with in the pages of *Young India*. In my opinion, the best *shraddha* that a son can perform in respect of his departed parents is to weave into his life all the good qualities of his parents. To merely repeat the letter of the scriptures is to destroy their very soul.

Yours sincerely,

Sjt. S. G. Datar
Pleader
Bagalkot

From a microfilm: S.N. 12661

299. LETTER TO R. RAMASWAMI

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 23, 1927

Dear Friend,

I have your letter enclosing an article on khadi. I do not think it is necessary to publish it in *Young India*. I therefore return it. In my opinion, khadi will not become popular by publishing general statements of the kind you have prepared. It requires organization and personal propaganda both of which are being attended to as far as is possible.

Yours sincerely,

Sjt. R. Ramaswami
6, Shivappa Mansion
Dadar, Bombay

From a microfilm: S.N. 12662

[1] Ritual offering to the spirit of a deceased ancestor

300. A LETTER

As at the Ashram
Sabarmati,
December 23, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

Here is the receipt for ten rupees sent through you by your mother. Please thank her for the donation.

For one who wants to become a true *brahmachari*, he should avoid all exciting foods, exciting conversation, exciting shows and occupy his body in some useful labour such as spinning, carding, weaving, occupying his mind in reading or writing pure things, and continuously think of God and believe that He witnessed all our thoughts and actions.

Yours sincerely,

Sjt.
Teeon
Old Sukkur

From a microfilm: S.N. 12663

301. LETTER TO S. V. VISVANATHA IYER

As at the Ashram,
Sabarmati,
December 23, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I was unable to reply to your letter earlier. I shall see what can be done with reference to your suggestion about having an examination. What, however, is now necessary is practical work rather than theoretical knowledge.

With reference to the ear ornaments, I have succeeded in inducing many women to dispense with them in spite of the prejudice you refer to. We have to deal with customs which have no moral basis or which are immoral, no matter how ancient they may be and how much backed they may be by prejudice.

Yours sincerely,

Sjt. S. V. Visvanatha Iyer
Vakil, Tuticorin

From a microfilm: S.N. 12664

302. LETTER TO CHERUKANDY KUTTAN

AS AT THE ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
December 23, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

Here is a copy of the letter from the Commissioner for Immigration and Asiatic Affairs, Pretoria, in reply to my enquiry. If you can give me fuller information, I shall communicate with the Natal authorities.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. CHERUKANDY KUTTAN
ENGLISH COMPOSITOR
"MALABAR SPECTATOR" PRESS
CALICUT (S. MALABAR)

From a microfilm: S.N. 12665

303. LETTER TO K. KELAPPAN

AS AT THE ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
December 23, 1927

MY DEAR KELAPPAN,

I have not heard from you as it were for ages. Here is a letter[1]; please read it and tell me if you know anything about this colony and, if you do not, you must visit it, and report.

What have you done about the committee that I proposed and what have you done with the fund left with you?

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. KELAPPAN NAIR
PAYOLI
N. MALABAR

From a microfilm: S.N. 14624

[1] From V. K. Sankara Menon, Manager, Pulaya Colony, Chalakudi, a colony run by the Depressed Classes Development Society. He had invited Gandhiji's suggestions and advice.

304. SPEECH AT KHADI AND HINDI EXHIBITIONS, MADRAS

December 23, 1927

Mahatmaji, before declaring the Exhibition open, made a speech in English which was translated into Tamil by Mr. C. Rajagopalachari. He said that it was a great privilege to be called upon to open the exhibitions. He was not physically fit to raise his voice to such a pitch as to be heard by all. He was not going to make a long speech and he was not able, in his present state of health, to address such a large audience. He need not dwell long on the necessity for khaddar for he was just returning from Utkal where he had seen with his own eyes emaciated men and women on account of starvation. To such people khaddar would do an immense good. If the people present at the meeting had seen those famished people of Utkal they would readily agree with him that khadi was the only thing that could save them from such a low condition. Khadi was a movement in which Tamils and Telugus, and people of the north and south of India could take part without any distinction of caste or creed. A visit to Utkal would make them instinctively support the khadi movement. The khadi exhibition by the side of the industrial exhibition looked like an ant before an elephant. In the bigger exhibition there were both foreign and indigenous articles. In the khadi exhibition they would find only indigenous goods, hand-spun and hand-woven and there was no competition here, the only competition being 'how shall I serve, how shall I serve best'. In the khadi exhibition they would find goods manufactured by poor men and women and those goods must have given food to a number of poor people. Manchester goods and Indian mill-made goods went to enrich English and Indian capitalists, whereas khaddar provided food for the poorest labourers who had no other means of living. The khadi movement had given food to seventy-five thousand spinners scattered in 2,000 villages and also six thousand weavers lived by weaving khaddar cloth. He had mentioned only spinners and weavers in connection with the movement and had not taken into consideration others engaged in printing, dyeing, etc., who were benefited by it. In addition to these poor people about one thousand young men belonging to middle-class had also taken up the khadi work. Khadi would also give employment to the unemployed and solve the problem of unemployment among the middle classes which was agitating the minds of many. Khadi would give work to the people of India—Brahmins and Non-Brahmins, Hindus and Mussalmans and the so-called untouchables. Very soon they would go round the stalls to see the exhibits for themselves. When they did so, he would ask them to go round the exhibition with a feeling of sympathy for the poor and to consider what amount of energy and time must have been spent upon those products by the poor people to earn something to keep

body and soul together. They would also find that the cost of the khaddar products was much reduced.

Next to the khadi exhibition, they would find the Hindi exhibition. The Hindi movement was conceived in the interests of millions of Indians. Hindi or Hindustani was spoken by 21 crores of people and it was the mother tongue of many Mussalmans. It was the only language which could be inter-provincial. For some time past attempts had been made to propagate Hindi in South India. The Hindi Prachar Sabha had been instituted and had been giving instruction in Hindi to a large number of people in the Tamil Nadu and Andhra Desha. Many people in those two provinces had learnt Hindi and passed examinations. The Hindi exhibition was to have been opened by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya but, he having not arrived, he (Mahatmaji) had been asked to open the exhibition. He would ask them to learn Hindi and would inform them that it could be learnt easily. After learning it, they would find it a beautiful language.

With these words he declared the khadi and Hindi exhibitions open.

The Hindu, 24-12-1927

305. NOTE ON AN ARTICLE[1]

When shall we get rid of this stigma? Has even the last deluge[2] not opened the eyes of Hindus? Who created Dheds and Bhangis as low castes? When did the Brahmins and the Banias attain the status of higher castes?

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-12-1927

[1] This note follows M. K. Pandya's article complaining that untouchables were forbidden to enter the temple of Ranchhodaraiji at Dakor and to bathe in the Gomati tank near the temple.

[2] Heavy floods in Gujarat; *vide* Vol. XXXIV.

306. THE INDRARAJ SPINNING-WHEEL

In the issue of the *Khadipatrika* dated 1-12-27 Shri Harjivandas Kotak has written an article on the place that khadi occupies in Kashmir. I would recommend the article to all lovers of khadi. Its merit lies in Shri Harjivandas's personal experience. He has written the article after having observed things for himself during his stay in Kashmir. Three facts become clear from this.

(1) The importance of the spinning-wheel,
(2) The place it still occupies in Kashmir,
(3) The ruin of this invaluable industry in Kashmir.

We can get proofs of the value of the spinning-wheel in the south in Nagercoil right up to Kanyakumari. We get these right up to Assam in the east and we have now found them as far north as Kashmir. In the west, we find them right up to Kathiawar. I do not mention Karachi in the west because Karachi is a new city and, it is natural that people there being enamoured of wealth do not realize the value of the spinning-wheel—although even there, because of the efforts of such lovers of khadi as the late Shri Ranchhoddas even up to this day, propaganda for the spinning-wheel is being carried on in a new manner and khadi is being used.

Shri Harjivandas's article reveals that the silk produced there (in Kashmir) is not hand-spun. Until this day some of us who are fond of good clothes wore Kashmiri silk under the impression that it was hand-spun; however, it is clear that those who wish to use clothes of only hand-spun cotton, silk or wool must give up the use of Kashmiri silk. One should spin oneself as much as is necessary to prepare what one wishes to wear of the finest stuff; one should get cloth of medium quality spun at the nearest possible place, while inferior cloth could be bought from whatever an honest dealer sells under the name of hand-woven fabric.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-12-1927

307. WHAT SHOULD A HINDU WIDOW DO?

A gentleman from Ajmer writes in Hindi to say:

> I wish you to answer the following questions of mine, in *Navajivan*:
>
> How should Hindu widows not wishing to remarry spend the rest of their lives?
>
> Maharshi Dayanand has written to say that they should practise celibacy, educate themselves and also educate young girls.
>
> Do you agree with this view? If so, keeping in mind the present plight of our country, what would you like to add to this?

Maharshi Dayanand did not hold that all widows should spend their time in learning and teaching; this could only be by way of an example. In this case teaching means imparting a knowledge of letters. This knowledge is necessary to some extent; in my opinion, however, the more important teaching is how to stave off starvation. And every day, I am more firmly convinced that this lies in the spinning-wheel. If we of the middle class who are educated, and who look upon ourselves as belonging to the higher castes give a thought to the condition of the poorer classes, nothing else but the spinning-wheel will occur to us. The spinning-wheel will be plied mainly by women as it is primarily they who have time to spare. Hence I have been crying from the house-tops at various places, day and night, that it is through them that we would prevent crores of rupees from being drained out of the country and secure true swaraj—*Ramarajya*[1].

It is women who can readily approach others of their sex. Here in the Province of Orissa where I happen to write this, and where even the poorer women observe *purdah*, who can set aside *purdah* and approach them? I sent Mirabehn who has accompanied me to the women of a certain village. About fifty women surrounded her and became crazy with joy; they started asking her about many things and the spinning-wheel came up for discussion. These women were absolutely naive, simple and ignorant. It is innumerable women of this type who should really be educated. Widows with pure character can readily impart such education,

[1] Traditionally regarded as the ideal political order; literally, Rama's rule

serve their own interest and, at the same time, help India solve its problems. Widows who are benevolently inclined can easily learn this work and do justice to it. However, an important prior condition for this is that they should be keen on going to villages and, while living there, should not get impatient. A widow who takes the vow of celibacy is not a helpless, crippled individual. If she is fit for self-realization, she is a strong independent woman capable of protecting herself. Compared with this, the education given to girls today is, I think, of little consequence. If however a widow refuses to go to the villages, idles away her time or, year after year, runs' from one place of supposed pilgrimage to another, mistaking this for dharma, it is obviously better if she stayed even in the city and engaged herself in teaching children. She has before her the vast field of nursing the sick. Very few Hindu women take up the profession of nursing. Widows in Maharashtra are found undergoing this training. Outside Maharashtra, very few widows are prepared to undergo this training. However, the jobs that I have suggested should also be regarded only as examples. Every sensible widow who wishes to practise celibacy should seek out some useful activity for herself and devote her whole life to it.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 25-12-1927

308. LETTER TO DR. M. A. ANSARI

December 25, 1927

DEAR DR. ANSARI,

I had a long chat with Malaviyaji. The resolution on the cow and the music as it stands does not satisfy him, nor does it satisfy me. I have suggested two formulas to which he agrees and thinks the Hindu Mahasabha will agree.

The first is this: the preamble instead of mentioning rights should say "without prejudice to the rights of either party, etc.".[1]

The second which I consider to be the most important and the true solution is that Mussalmans should forgo cow-slaughter and the Hindus should forgo music before mosques. They should be part of legislation by common consent. Malaviyaji thinks that if

[1] This suggestion seems to have been accepted; *vide* Appendix IX, Part B—Section 1 of the Resolution on Hindu-Muslim Unity.

the second proposal can be accepted by the Mussalmans, he will be able to carry the Hindu Sabha with him.

If you think that there is anything in the two proposals please postpone passing the unity resolutions and let us discuss the proposals in all their bearings.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 12391

309. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

December 26, 1927

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have altered your resolutions. The Orissa resolution should not be in the Congress. Because there are so many places that have suffered. The special poverty of Orissa is chronic. I shall see what can be done about Gregg's book proof-reading. I have not attended any sittings of the Congress Committee. Am having good rest. Doctors here see no special rise in blood-pressure. I leave tomorrow or the day after. Expect you at the Ashram on or before 13th January. Tucker is with me.

Love.

MOHAN

C. F. ANDREWS, ESQ.
SANTINIKETAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2627

310. LETTER TO FULCHAND K. SHAH

CENTRAL STATION, MADRAS,
Silence Day [December 26, 1927][1]

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

I got your letter. It is worthy of you. I had no doubt at all, and did not worry about the thing.

I hope to reach the Ashram on Saturday at the latest.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2832. Courtesy: Sharadabehn Shah

[1] From the postmark

311. LETTER TO REVASHANKER JHAVERI

Monday [December 26, 1927][1]

RESPECTED REVASHANKERBHAI,

From Devdas's letter, received today, I gather that you, too, have fallen ill and have returned to Bombay. I intend to leave this place tomorrow and will arrive there on Thursday. If I don't I shall arrive on Friday without fail. May God protect you.

Pranam from
MOHANDAS

RESPECTED REVASHANKERBHAI
MANIBHUVAN
7, LABURNUM ROAD
GAMDEVI, BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1266

312. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

MADRAS,
Monday [December 26, 1927][2]

DEAR SISTERS,

I have your letter. I had in fact intended to leave this place this very day. But now I do hope to leave tomorrow or Wednesday at any rate. That is, let us say we will meet at the latest by Saturday.

I can understand that just now none of you can set out for Utkal. Ultimately many of the women workers must come from the Ashram.

I do not understand what you say about committing the mistake of having a telegram written for you. Well, now you will explain it when we meet.

We never forget the work that is dear to us. I have seen devout men and women offering all manner of service at temples with great love and interest. Our faith, it is said, is that the *yajna* of

[1] From the postmark
[2] From the reference to Utkal and Gandhiji's return to Ashram

spinning enjoys pride of place among all forms of service. If you have any doubts regarding this, do by all means question me.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 7770. Courtesy: Radhabehn Chaudhri

313. RESOLUTION ON INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

[December 27, 1927][1]

This Congress, while acknowledging the relief received by the Indian settlers in South Africa and regarding the signing of the Indo-Union Agreement as a token of the desire of the Union Government to Accord better treatment to the Indian settlers, cannot be satisfied till the status of the settlers is brought on par with that of the enfranchised inhabitants of the Union and appeals to the Union Government to consolidate the goodwill created between the two countries by repealing all class legislation, especially the Colour Bar Act of 1926, the clause in the Liquor Bill of 1927 prohibiting the employment of Indians as waiters in hotels and the Municipal Land Alienation Ordinances of Natal in so far as the latter involve racial segregation.

This Congress places on record its sense of deep gratitude to Deenabandhu C. F. Andrews for his great and humanitarian work in South Africa and East Africa in connection with the status of the Indian settlers in those countries.

Report of the Forty-second Indian National Congress at Madras, 1927, p. 59

[1] The resolution was drafted by Gandhiji. Dr. M. A. Ansari, the President, moved it at the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Madras on 27-12-1927. The resolution was carried unanimously.

314. LETTER TO DR. M. A. ANSARI

December 28, 1927

DEAR DR. ANSARI,

The Cow Resolution has shaken me to the marrow. I could read it carefully only last night. The more I think of it, the more I shrink from it. The draft[1] I sent with M. A. Azad is no substitute. I have told the Maulana Saheb that it does not in any way satisfy me. The only solution that I can see is the one I have suggested. I would therefore urge you not to proceed with that resolution at all during this session. I must have a chat with the Mussalman friends who are here and whom I know, and place before them my awful position. But I won't trouble you at this stage. You have so many things on your hands. I am, however, trying to see the Brothers. I came to help. I am now becoming a hindrance. My grief is indescribable.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 12392

315. A LETTER[2]

December 28, 1927

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

The cow resolution has left a deep scar on my heart. I would like to discuss it with you and explain to you my difficulty. I want you both and if possible Shwaib. You may bring the other friends who may be available.

With love,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 12393

[1] Presumably Part B—Section 1 of the Resolution on Hindu-Muslim Unity adopted by the Congress; *vide* Appendix IX.

[2] Presumably addressed to Maulana Mahomed Ali; *vide* the preceding item.

316. POLITICAL PRISONERS

Lala Dunichand of Ambala has sent me a copy of the statement published by him in England about political prisoners who are undergoing incarceration in the various jails of India. The statement contains nothing new for the Indian public and might easily have been fuller and more precise for the purpose intended by the author. In a covering note he administers to me a gentle rebuke for rarely mentioning these prisoners. If the absence of mention of these countrymen of ours means apathy or negligence on my part, the rebuke is well deserved. But I claim that I yield to no one in my desire to see these prisoners released. But the omission to mention these cases is deliberate. I hope that the pages of *Young India* do not contain any idle words. Whatever is written in these pages has a definite purpose. Time was when I used to analyse these cases and expose the injustice done in many of them. But that was when I had faith in the British system and when I used to take pride in its ultimate goodness. Having lost that faith, I have lost also the power of making an effective appeal to the administrators of that system. I can no longer write about British fair play and the British sense of justice. On the contrary, I feel that the administrators are precluded by their system from dealing out fair play or justice when their system is or seems to them to be in jeopardy. It is still possible, I admit, to secure justice from them when their system is not at stake in any shape or form. But when that system is or is felt by them to be in danger they lose not only their sense of justice and fair play but they lose their balance and no means appear to them to be too dishonourable or despicable for adoption to sustain it. Dyerism and O'Dwyerism[1] were no isolated phenomena. Only I was blind to them before Jallianwala. As a matter of fact, they have been resorted to in all climes and at all times whenever they have felt the need of them.

I am satisfied that the political prisoners who are held under restraint with or without trial, decorous or farcical, are so held in the interest of that system. The administrators would far rather discharge a murderer caught red-handed and found guilty of murder committed for private ends than discharge a political

[1] General Dyer and O'Dwyer were responsible for the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh in April 1919.

prisoner suspected of designs on their system, especially if he, the suspect, is believed to have violent means in view.

It seems to me therefore to be waste of time and inconsistent with respect to make any appeal to the administrators in behalf of the political prisoners Lala Dunichand has in view. And he has in mind the prisoners of the Gadr party, the Punjab Martial Law prisoners and the Bengal detenus. Nor need we be led astray by solitary discharges like that of Sjt. Subhas Bose. In spite of the agitation that was set on foot he would in all probability not have been discharged if his precarious health had not come to the rescue. Indeed, have they not said in the plainest language possible that they were released purely on grounds of ill health? Has not Earl Winterton[1] flatly declined to release the Bengal detenus in answer to the appeal to create a favourable atmosphere for their precious Statutory Commission?

Let those who still have faith in the system by all means make an appeal to the British sense of justice and fair play.

My course is clear. We have not yet paid anything like adequate price for the freedom we would fain breathe. I therefore regard these imprisonments as only a small part of the price we have to pay if we would have the freedom which is the birthright of man. And we shall have to march as willing victims to the slaughter-house and not helplessly like goats and sheep. We may do this violently or non-violently. The way of violence can only lead us to a blind alley and must cause endless suffering to unwilling ignorant men and women who do not know what freedom is and who have no desire to buy the valuable article. The way of non-violence is the surest and the quickest way to freedom and causes the least suffering and that only to those who are prepared for it, indeed would gladly court it. But suffering, intense, extensive and agonizing, there must be in every case. What we have gone through is but a sample of what is to come.

Therefore the task before those, who share my views about the inherent evil of the system, is to cease to appeal to the administrators, and ceaselessly and with unquenchable faith in our cause and the means to appeal to the nation. Not until the nation has developed enough strength to open the prison gates, can these prisoners be released with honour and dignity for it and them. Till then let us with becoming patience and courage submit to the imprisonment of the prisoners and ourselves prepare joyfully to share their fate. We shall certainly not hasten the

[1] Under-Secretary of State for India

advent of freedom by appealing to deaf ears for mercy and thus unconsciously inducing in the people a mentality that would dread the prisons and the gallows. Lovers of freedom have to learn to regard these as welcome friends and deliverers.

Young India, 29-12-1927

317. INTERVIEW TO "INDIAN DAILY MAIL"

BOMBAY,
December 30, 1927

In reply to a question by the interviewer as to which of the three draft constitutions[1] drawn up by the Madras leaders he considered best suited to India, Mr. Gandhi said that he had no decisive opinion about the future Constitution of India. He, however, added:

The Constitution of India is not a matter for a single individual to decide.

Seated in the midst of his friends and disciples, plying the inseparable charkha, Mr. Gandhi politely invited our representative to put questions to him. "What are your impressions of the Madras Session of the Congress?", was the first question by the interviewer.

ANSWER: The Madras Session was a unique one inasmuch as it seems to have laid the foundation of Hindu-Muslim unity. This, I say, not because of the quality of the resolutions, but because of the manner in which they were presented and accepted. Pandit Malaviyaji's happy speech and the still happier response made by Ali Brothers appeared to me to be a good augury for future. I was not present when the scene of Maulana Mahomed Ali in ecstacy falling at Malaviyaji's feet and Maulana Shaukat Ali fanning him after he had finishes his great speech took place; but it was described to me by the President of the Congress. It filled me with great joy and hope. I hope this spirit of cordiality and mutual trust will prove infectious and we shall be able to find such trust amongst the rank and file. Both Dr. Ansari and Mr. S. Aiyengar deserve the gratitude of the nation for this happy event.

[1] Submitted before the Madras Session of the Congress; the Working Committee was given power to confer with other bodies and place a revised draft before a Special Convention for approval.

Asked why he was not present when the Independence Resolution[1] was discussed, Mr. Gandhi said that he was not expected to be present at any of the meetings of the Committee because of his health. It was against the instruction of doctors and against the wishes of his friends that he had gone to Madras which he did only in order to help to the best of his ability Mr. Srinivasa Aiyengar and Dr. Ansari and to be available to them if at all it was necessary. He was not supposed to take any part in the deliberations of the Working Committee, Subjects Committee or even in the open Session. He never attended any of the Committee meetings except one informal meeting and he attended the Congress at the opening only for a few minutes.

Our representative asked: "But is it true that you did not approve of the Independence Resolution?"

ANSWER: That is an open secret. But my disapproval of the Independence Resolution is based upon grounds that are not common to those who generally condemn the Independence Resolution. I dealt with the subject last year when the Independence Resolution was passed and I have given my reasons for my attitude towards it. Let me, however, guard myself against any possible misunderstanding. I do not for one moment consider that India is not fit for independence, or that she is not ripe for it.

Our representative next mentioned the death[2] of Hakim Ajmal Khan and Mr. Gandhi made the following statement:

It is a great and grievous loss at this juncture. Hakim Ajmal Khan was one of the truest servants of India and for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity he was one of the most invaluable men. I can but hope that what we did not do and learn during his lifetime we shall now learn after and by his death. If the accounts that have been published, viz., that Hindus took part in paying respect to the memory of the deceased in just as large numbers as the Mussalmans, are true, it is a very healthy sign and I hope that the spirit of brotherhood and friendliness that has been evoked in Delhi by his death will continue and become permanent and percolate throughout the length and breadth of the land.

For me the death of Hakimji is a deep personal loss. I entirely associate myself with the appeal issued by Dr. Ansari and other leaders that the National Muslim University at Delhi which Hakimji nursed with very delicate care should be placed beyond

[1] In a separate resolution, the Congress declared "the goal of the Indian people to be complete National Independence".

[2] On 29-12-1927

any risk by patriotic Indians subscribing to the Fund that Hakimji was raising for putting its finances on a firm footing. But, of course, the best monument to be raised to the memory of the great patriot would be to bring about unbreakable unity between Hindus, Mussalmans and other communities residing in India.

The Searchlight, 6-1-1928

318. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

December 31, 1927

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I got both your letters. I have now returned to the Ashram, and shall know, therefore, what letters arrive. You gave at least one particular in your letter, and that was good. I understand what you say about Sastriji. You can boldly, but courteously, tell him what you may wish to. You have given a good description of your conversation with him.

I certainly like the idea of closing the Durban Office. Personally, I believe that, if the paper does not run on its own merit, we should not be too eager to continue it. If it runs on its own merit, it should without difficulty run even from Phoenix. Do not run it by incurring debts or simply for the sake of running it. In this matter, at any rate, please do accept my advice. If you find it difficult to stay there on this condition, both of you should return here. Do not wait till it is too late.

You have not replied to what I said about the money you owe to the Ashram. This is to remind you again.

And now to Sushila:

Your letters are dull. Manilal is justified in saying that, being very busy with work, he cannot write much, but you certainly ought to write. If you have interest in life, you will find much to write about. Sons and daughters fill sheets and sheets when writing to their parents about their happy and unhappy experiences, but your letters contain no more than a few lines. Your physique does not seem yet to have become stronger. If you wish, you may consult some doctor there. Do anything, but get strong. If you wish to return here, discuss the matter between you two. So far as I am concerned, you have my permission. It will also be for you to decide where you will live. You may live either here or at Akola. Think of me not as a father-in-law but as a father.

In order that you may be able to do some service, it is also your duty to take care of your body. Do not neglect that duty.

I saw Nilkanth[1] yesterday. He has returned from Japan. You must have got his letter. Balubhai, too, saw me.

Let me know:

The time when you get up and the hours of meals. How often and what you eat. The day's time-table, the contacts you have made there, the expenses, etc. I had the cable signed by four of you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 4732

319. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

Thursday, 1927[2]

CHI. MANI,

I don't like your having an attack of fever and the persistent weakness since then. Undertake nothing beyond your physical capacity. I do not know if there is still time for it, but I shall be glad to know if you are elected a delegate to the Congress.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

If you see any newspaper reports about my health, be sure that they are exaggerated. There has been at times a rise and at other times a fall in the blood-pressure during this tour.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 58

[1] Mashruwala

[2] For this and the subsequent letters of 1927, precise dates are not ascertainable.

320. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

1927

CHI. MANI,

Should people leave the Ashram when they fall ill? I do not even know where you have gone. Now that you have run away you must at any rate get well soon. Remember you are free to join me if you are not at ease. Self-denial pays only to the extent that it is endurable. If it does not pay, it is no good. Every day I wait for some news of you.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

You know the tour programme, don't you?

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 57

321. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

Monday [1927][1]

CHI. JAMNALAL,

Here is the letter from Rajendrababu. I had written to him that he might, if he liked, withdraw the case. But now it cannot be done because Baijnathji had already been told that it would be pursued. I am sorry about this.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2881

[1] *Panchama Putrane Bapuna Ashirvad*, (p. 42) also places this along with letters for 1927.

322. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
Monday [January 2, 1928][1]

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

I got both your letters. On my part, I have tried my best to bring you here and am still trying. Let's see what God wills. Keep in mind the verse from the second chapter of the *Gita*: "Whose mind is untroubled in sorrows and longeth not for joys"[2].

My health is fair. I shall certainly be here for the next three months at least. Mrityunjaya[3] and Vidyavati[4] are both doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3303

323. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU[5]

Not Revised

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 4, 1928

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I feel that you love me too well to resent what I am about to write. In any case I love you too well to restrain my pen when I feel I must write.

You are going too fast. You should have taken time to think and become acclimatized. Most of the resolutions you framed

[1] From the reference to Gandhiji's proposed stay at the Ashram "for the next three months", the letter appears to have been written in the first week of January 1928; *vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", 5-1-1928.

[2] II. 56

[3] Rajendra Prasad's son

[4] Mrityunjaya's wife, Prabhavati's sister

[5] This was published along with the following note from Jawaharlal Nehru: "I returned from Europe in December 1927 and went straight to the Madras Session of the Indian National Congress. A number of resolutions were passed there at my instance. This letter was written by Gandhiji because he did not approve of some of my activities at this session."

and got carried could have been delayed for one year. Your plunging into the 'republican army' was a hasty step. But I do not mind these acts of yours so much as I mind your encouraging mischief-makers and hooligans. I do not know whether you still believe in unadulterated non-violence. But even if you have altered your views, you could not think that unlicensed and unbridled violence is going to deliver the country. If careful observation of the country in the light of your European experiences convinces you of the error of the current ways and means, by all means enforce your own views, but do please form a disciplined party. You know the Cawnpore experiences. In every struggle bands of men who would submit to discipline are needed. You seem to be overlooking this factor in being careless about your instruments.

If I can advise you, now that you are the working secretary of the Indian National Congress, it is your duty to devote your whole energy to the central resolution, i.e., Unity, and the important but secondary resolution, i.e., boycott of the Simon Commission.[1] The Unity resolution[2] requires the use of all your great gifts of organization and persuasion.

I have not time to elaborate my points, but *verb. sap.*

I hope Kamala is keeping as well as in Europe.

Yours,
BAPU

A Bunch of Old Letters, pp. 55-6

324. IN MEMORIAM

In the death of Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan the country has lost one of its truest servants. Hakim Saheb's was a many-sided personality. He was not merely an able physician who practised his art as much for the rich as for the poor. But he was a courtier patriot. Though he passed his time among potentates, he was a thorough-going democrat. He was a great Mussalman and equally great Indian. He loved equally Hindus and Mussalmans and was in turn equally respected and loved by both. Hindu-Muslim unity was the breath of his nostrils. His later days were soured because of our dissensions. But he never lost faith in his

[1] *Vide* Appendix VII.
[2] *Vide* Appendix IX.

country or his people. He felt that both the communities were bound in the end to unite. Having that unchangeable faith, he never ceased to work for unity. Though he took time, he finally threw in his lot with the non-co-operators and did not hesitate to put in peril his fondest and greatest creation, the Tibbia College. He loved this College with a passion which only those who knew him well could realize. In Hakimji I have lost not merely a wise and steadfast co-worker, I have lost a friend on whom I could rely in the hour of need. He was my constant guide in the matter of Hindu-Muslim unity. His judgement, sobriety and knowledge of human nature enabled him for the most part to give correct decisions. Such a man never dies. Though he is no longer in the flesh with us, his spirit shall be ever with us and calls us even now to a faithful discharge of our duty. And no memorial that we can raise to perpetuate his memory can be complete until we have achieved real Hindu-Muslim unity. May God grant that we may learn to do through his death what we failed to do in his lifetime.

But Hakimji was no idle dreamer. He believed in realizing his dream. As he realized his dream about medicine through the Tibbia College, so he sought partially to realize his political dream through the Jamia Millia. When this national university was almost on the point of dying, he, almost single-handed, carried out a plan of removing the institution from Aligarh to Delhi. But the removal meant more worry for him. He believed himself hence forward to be specially responsible for the financial stability of the College. He was the principal man to find support for it either from his own pocket or by way of contributions collected from personal friends. The immediate and indispensable memorial that the nation can raise is to put the financial condition of the Jamia on a stable basis. Both Hindus and Mussalmans are and should be equally interested in it. It is one of the four national universities still struggling for existence, the other three being the Bihar, Kashi and Gujarat Vidyapiths. When the Jamia was brought into being Hindus subscribed liberally to it. The national ideal has been kept intact in this Muslim institution. I commend to the attention of the reader the note[1] prepared by Sjt. Ramachandran[2] out of his own experience covering over twelve months. In Principal Zakir Husain it has a learned Principal of

[1] "What I Saw in the Jamia", published in *Young India*, 5-1-1928
[2] G. Ramachandran, a Gandhian educationist

liberal views and undoubted nationalism. The Principal is ably assisted by a chosen staff some of whom have travelled abroad and possess foreign degrees. The institution has grown since its transfer to Delhi and if it is well supported, it promises rich results. There can be no doubt that it is the duty of those Hindus and Mussalmans who wish to honour the memory of Hakim Saheb, who believe in the constructive side of non-co-operation and who believe in Hindu-Muslim unity, to give as much financial assistance as is possible for them to give. Dr. Ansari, Sjt. Srinivasa Aiyengar, Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru have already issued an appeal in this matter. I am now trying through Principal Zakir Husain to find out the exact condition and placing myself in correspondence with Dr. Ansari, and as soon as I have collected enough information, I hope to lay it before the readers. In the mean time I invite subscriptions so as not to lose time. The subscriptions received will not be handed to anyone unless a proper committee is formed and an absolutely correct administration of funds is assured. I do hope that Hindus and Mussalmans will vie with one another to swell the subscription list.

Young India, 5-1-1928

325. THE NATIONAL CONGRESS

UNITY

The special feature of Dr. Ansari's speech was its intense hunger for unity. He knew that he was expected to bring it about. And if any single person could do it, it was certainly Dr. Ansari. He accepted the highest honour in the gift of the nation because he had confidence in the nation, the cause and himself. He certainly left no stone unturned to achieve his ambition. Stars favoured him. Sjt. Srinivasa Aiyengar helped him by his very recklessness. No other president would perhaps have dared as he did after the partial failure at Simla. But Sjt. Aiyengar was not the man to shrink. He took Dr. Ansari, the Ali Brothers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and others with him and with his accustomed impetuosity carried his resolution. He was not committed to any formula. When the almost fatal flaw in the resolution about the cow and music was pointed out and a substitute submitted, he whole-heartedly, frankly and generously

admitted the flaw and accepted the substitute as a great improvement on the original. The Mussalmans present rose to the occasion and, though not without some reluctance and hesitation at first, accepted the substitute without reserve. Pandit Malaviyaji had come with the full intention of accommodating himself to the general wish so far as it was possible for him. He knew and everybody realized that it was within his power to block the way. He did not. True, he had many amendments which he considered were necessary but he was not going to resist the resolution if his amendments could not be carried. Pandit Malaviyaji is probably the oldest Congressman. His loyalty to the Congress is beyond compare. His patriotism is of the highest order. But my Mussalman friends have hitherto always belittled my faith in his *bona fides* and nationalism as against communalism. I have never been able to suspect either even where I have not been able to share his views on Hindu-Muslim questions. It was, therefore, a great joy to me that the Ali Brothers warmly acclaimed his great speech on the unity resolution. So long as Hindu and Mussalman leaders distrust one another's motives, speeches and actions, there can be no real unity in spite of perfect resolutions. Let us hope that the trust generated at the meeting will continue and prove highly infectious. Maulana Mahomed Ali, in his joy over Malaviyaji's speech, said that the Mussalmans no longer wanted protection of minorities from Earl Winterton for it could be better secured by Malaviyaji. If there be one Hindu who can guarantee such protection on behalf of Hindus it is Malaviyaji. But whether he can 'deliver goods' or not, I would like the Maulana and the other Mussalmans and all minorities once for all to renounce the idea of expecting or getting protection from a third party. It were better, if such protection be not given voluntarily by the majority, to wrest it by force from unwilling hands than that a third party should be invited to intervene and should weaken and humiliate both and hold the nation under bondage. The greatest contribution of the Congress then to me was this apparent change of heart.

So far as the vast mass of Hindus are concerned, they are interested only in the cow and music resolution. It was wholly bad in its original form. As it has finally emerged from the Subjects Committee and passed, all that can be said for it is that it is innocuous and that it is the best that could be had at this stage of the national evolution. But I for one cannot enthuse over it. I can only tolerate it as passable. Nevertheless it has great possibilities. If the appeal of the Congress penetrates the hearts

of Hindus and Mussalmans and if each party spares the feelings of the other in terms of the claims advanced by each, peace is in sight and swaraj within easy grasp. A definite realization of the folly of fratricide and corresponding action will be the best and the most dignified answer to Lord Birkenhead's insolent flaunting of British might in the nation's face.[1]

It is, therefore, profitable to examine the meaning of the Congress appeal. I know what would spare the Hindus' feeling in the matter of the cow. It is nothing short of complete voluntary stoppage of cow-slaughter by Mussalmans whether for sacrifice or for food. The Hindu dharma will not be satisfied if some tyrant secured by force of arms immunity of the cow from the slaughter. Islam in India cannot make a better gift to the Hindus than this voluntary self-denial. And I know enough of Islam to be able to assert that Islam does not compel cow-slaughter and it does compel its followers to spare and respect to the full the feelings of their neighbours whenever it is humanly possible. For me, music before mosques is not on a par with cow-slaughter. But it has assumed an importance which it would be folly to ignore. It is for the Mussalmans to say what would spare Mussalman feelings. And if complete stoppage of music before mosques will be the only thing that will spare the Mussalman feelings, it is the duty of the Hindus to do so without a moment's thought. If we are to reach unity of hearts, we must each be prepared to perform an adequate measure of sacrifice.

If this much-to-be-desired consummation is to be reached, Dr. Ansari will have to send out peace parties with definite instructions to preach the message and secure for it the approval of the masses. Have we sufficient energy for the mission, have we enough honest, industrious and willing missionaries? Let us hope.

Irresponsibility

Though I was not able to attend any of the Committee meetings, I could not fail to perceive that irresponsible talk and work were the order of the day. Indiscipline was not a rare feature. Resolutions involving great consequences were sprung upon the Subjects Committee and readily accepted by that august body without much thought or discussion. The Independence Resolution[2] that was rejected last year was passed almost without opposition. I know that its wording was harmless but, in my humble opinion,

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXVII.

[2] *Vide* footnote to "Interview to *Indian Daily Mail*", 30-12-1927.

it was hastily conceived and thoughtlessly passed. I hope to deal with this resolution separately in an early issue.[1]

The boycott of British goods resolution was passed with an equally light heart. The Congress stultifies itself by repeating year after year resolutions of this character when it knows that it is not capable of carrying them into effect. By passing such resolutions we make an exhibition of our impotence, become the laughing-stock of critics and invite the contempt of the adversary.

Let me not be misunderstood. The Congress has a perfect right to boycott British goods if it so wishes. But as the most representative assembly in India, it has no right to expose itself to ridicule by using threats which it cannot carry into effect. I have singled out but two out of the several irresponsible resolutions passed by the Congress.

The conception behind the Congress constitution was to make it the most representative and authoritative body in all India, and by its commanding voluntary obedience on the part of millions, automatically, almost imperceptibly to replace the sham enslaving assemblies and councils and other foreign machinery masquerading under the name of representative bodies. But the Congress cannot become the irresistible force it was and is intended to be, if its resolutions are ill-conceived and are to remain merely paper resolutions having no response from the people or having no correspondence to the popular wants and aspirations and if the members are not to observe the rules of discipline, decorum and common honesty. If they only knew, if they would regard themselves as servants of the nation, the members of the All-India Congress Committee have the rights and opportunities of service equal to those of the members of any parliament in the world. But at the present moment, we have almost sunk to the level of the schoolboys' debating society.

The Working Committee is the national cabinet. It has to enforce the resolutions of the Congress and the All-India Congress Committee. It must, therefore, be the body responsible for bringing before the A.I.C.C. resolutions required for the attainment of the Congress goal. Any non-official resolutions sprung upon the A.I.C.C. must be carefully scrutinized and should have but a remote chance of passing, if opposed by the Working Committee. Every resolution, official or unofficial, must have behind it a working plan. When, therefore, an unofficial resolution is

[1] *Vide* "Independence *v.* Swaraj", 12-1-1928.

brought forward, the sponsor must be prepared to disclose his plan of action if his proposal is to be accepted. A resolution proposing the establishment in every village of a free night school for its adult population has everything to commend itself to a body like the Congress. But if the proposer has no definite feasible plan of action behind it, the A.I.C.C. would be justified and bound to reject it summarily. If then the Congress is to retain its prestige and usefulness, the members of the A.I.C.C. will have to revise their attitude and realize their great responsibility.

The Elephant and the Ant

In my humble opinion, the Reception Committee of the Congress at Madras committed a grave blunder by permitting and countenancing the so-called All-India Exhibition under its aegis. That it received Government patronage and *imprimatur* adds nothing to its merit, if it does not rob it of what little merit it otherwise might have had. The Congress long ago outlived Government favours and frowns. The ideals for which the Congress has been working since, say, 1918, to go no further back, were almost all ignored in the plan of this Exhibition. Let me point out what the All-India Exhibition contained. Among the pavilions were several assigned to foreign firms for exhibiting their wares, one assigned to machinery and mechanical contrivances, some to textiles containing foreign yarn, others to foreign clocks and watches. There was little of swadeshi, much of foreign and British goods about the Exhibition, and this in the name of and under the patronage of a Congress which promulgates the gospel of swadeshi and which has on its programme a boycott of British goods! There was hardly anything to interest or instruct the villagers. The Exhibition represented not the rural civilization of India, but the exploiting city civilization of the West. It was a denial of the Congress spirit and was in marked contrast to the khadi and swadeshi exhibitions of the past six years. The textile court seemed to have been designed to ridicule khadi although the Congress still retains the khadi franchise and lends its name to the activities of the All-India Spinners' Association. As if the visitors were to be all English, all the notices were printed in English. Here is one designed to belittle khadi.

> Feed the poor and work the able.
> Let the charkha spin the weft
> And the mill the warp.
> In this combination lies the solution

Unless the author of this notice has a deliberately mischievous intention, he has demonstrated his ignorance of the evolution of khadi. The fallacy of charkha weft and mill warp has been often exposed and refuted in these columns. Suffice it here to say that the charkha would have died a well-deserved death if the policy of using charkha yarn for weft only had long continued. Experience has shown that the combination was bad in every respect.

Here is another equally, if not more, mischievous poster:

> To force a weaver to use hand-spun warp yarn
> Is like forcing him to fight a battleship with a knife.
> To cut a weaver off from the best methods of work
> Is like cutting off his thumbs.

This poster betrays venomous prejudice against khadi and ignorance of the art of weaving and the condition of weavers. The writer forgets that all the world over, a time was when weavers took delight in using hand-spun yarn both for weft and warp and that the art then exhibited by the weaver has never yet been excelled. The writer could easily have corrected himself by visiting the khadi court outside the precious All-India Exhibition court. He would there have seen weavers actually working fairy tales on hand-spun warp with the same ease and facility that they would have with mill-spun yarn. It is easy of proof that, whereas mill-spun yarn must in time—not far off—kill out the weaver, hand-spun yarn must revive and is reviving the weaver and has already rescued some of them from the butcher's trade and closet-cleaning work. Every ten hand-spinners mean an addition of one whole-time weaver, one whole-time carder, not to mention more work for dhobis, tailors, carpenters, blacksmiths, dyers, printers, etc.

The coming into being of this foreign and anti-India-spirit exhibition under the Congress aegis is an ocular and forcible demonstration of the irresponsibility to which I have already adverted. I do not think any Congressman deliberately countenanced this white elephant. Want of thought, want of care, want of responsibility are answerable for—I cannot help calling—this scandalous creation.

There was no doubt the ant of the Khadi Exhibition was happily thrown outside the elephant court. Rumour has it that the Madras Government would not have a Khadi Exhibition inside the all-India court. It certainly suited me. For, having gained

a knowledge of what this all-India exhibition was, I would have found it difficult, if not impossible, even for opening the Khadi Exhibition to enter what was chiefly a foreign court—a reminder of national humiliation. The Khadi Exhibition on the other hand was, though like an ant, a work of indigenous art. It was a school for study and demonstration of the potency of khadi. There was beside it an Indian fine arts court, a result of the devoted labours of Dr. J. H. Cousins. No doubt there were a few other things purely Indian or a result of Indian enterprise in the so-called All-India Exhibition. But they only served to entrap the unwary and as a shield for the predominant foreign show.

Let future Reception Committees beware.

Young India, 5-1-1928

326. A CALL TO INDIA'S POETESS

Shrimati Sarojini Devi has received a call[1] from America chiefly for the purpose of undoing the mischief created by Miss Mayo's untruthful and libellous production. No writing undertaken in India can possibly overtake the mischief done by that sensation-monger who has the ear of a gullible public—hungering for and living on sensation. No serious American can possibly be taken in by Miss Mayo's scurrilous writings. The seriously-minded American does not need any refutation. And the general public that has been already affected by *Mother India* will never read the refutations, however brilliant, attempted in India. The idea, therefore, has been happily conceived in America of bringing out Sarojini Devi on a lecturing tour by way of reply to *Mother India*. If Sarojini Devi would respond to the invitation, her visit is likely to undo some at least of the mischief wrought by Miss Mayo's novel. That the Poetess would draw crowds wherever she goes and command a patient and respectful hearing need not be doubted. She is as sure by the magic of her eloquence to captivate American imagination as she captivated South African[2] and paved the way for the Round Table Conference, and finally for the great work that the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri is doing in South Africa. Let us hope that the way would be clear for her to accept the invitation and that Dr. Ansari would be able to

[1] *Vide* "Cable to Dhan Gopal Mukerjee", 14-11-1927.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XXIV.

spare her for the foreign mission that seems to call this gifted daughter of India.

Young India, 5-1-1928

327. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 5, 1928

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

You must have received my letter sent with Jamnalalji. I had also sent a telegram asking you not to attend the Assembly till your health returned to normal. I wanted to mention this to the *pujya* Malaviyaji but we were so busy with other things that I did not remember you. I see no need of writing to him now. You must have sent the money to Jamnalalji? I have not yet heard about it.

The *pujya* Malaviyaji's speech had a magic effect and he proposes to make a mighty effort in this matter. Let us see what happens. Up to the end of March, I shall be at the Ashram itself. On the 17th I shall have to leave for Kathiawar on a five days' tour.[1]

Yours,
MOHANDAS

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6151. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

328. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
Friday [January 6, 1928][2]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

I cannot give a full reply to your letter just now. More when we meet.

The wool and sericulture businesses are good. We can take them up to a certain extent. Talk it over with me further.

[1] For the Kathiawar Political Conference

[2] The letter was received by the addressee on January 7, 1928.

I shall not have to give my blessings to Kusum, as I will not be attending that marriage. It seems to me that we must break the walls which divide the communities. But you may discuss this matter further with me. You may also talk to me about Navin and Dhiru. If Maneklal and others bear their own expenses, we should certainly keep them.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 9167. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

329. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 7, 1928

DEAR SATIS BABU,

I have been waiting to hear from you. It is clear that you are not yet fit for travelling. This fever must have brought on additional weakness and retarded convalescence. I hope however that the fever has not recurred.

I am glad Jawaharlal and Bharucha passed some time with you.

You will have seen that I anticipated you about the precious exhibition and many other things.

How is Nikhil[1] and how did Hemaprabha Devi feel?

I seem to be keeping well.

With love,

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1580

[1] Addressee's son who was seriously ill and later died in July 1928

330. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL N. CHOKSI

Saturday [January 7, 1928][1]

BHAISHRI NAJUKLAL,

I have your letter. I am all right. You will be surprised to know that I have not yet been able to see Moti or the child. I am completely engrossed in my daily work. Come and pay a visit when you can. Kusumbehn told me that you were suffering from megrim. It is a bad disease. A mud-pack helps in curing it. The diet should of course be light. Kusumbehn's manner of working is a bit too fastidious. She has not yet chosen her work. She takes up whatever work she feels like doing. But there is no need to worry.

Blessings from
BAPU

BHAISHRI NAJUKLAL CHOKSI
SEVASHRAM
BROACH

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12142

331. DISCOURSES ON THE "GITA"[2]

January 7, 1928

This chapter[3] is as sweet as the manner in which it has been sung. It is balm for people like us who suffer from inner torments. We are all troubled by evil desires, and the Lord holds out an assurance here to all those who seek refuge in Him that He will free them from such desires. We can also see from this chapter that at the time when the *Gita* was composed, distinctions of high and low had already made their appearance in the varnashrama system and some had come to be regarded as lower than others. In truth, however, can we describe anyone as higher

[1] From the postmark

[2] *Young India*, 12-1-1928, and *Navajivan*, 15-1-1928, also carried reports of the discourses which were delivered on January 6 and 7.

[3] IX

or lower than others? Let him who is completely free from evil desires point an accusing finger at another. All of us are equal in this regard, and this chapter points out the unfailing means of winning freedom from evil cravings, namely, total surrender to the Lord. We should not of course conclude from this that such surrender will by itself, without further effort on our part, purify us of our evil. If a person who is dragged by his senses, against his will, to objects of pleasures turns to God for help, with tears in his eyes, as he ceaselessly struggles against them, the Lord will certainly free him from the evil desires which trouble him.

Another thought also arises out of it, but we shall consider it tomorrow.

That thought is that this also explains the means of expiation of one's sins. Such expiation consists not in fasting, but in *bhakti*, in self-surrender. I fully understand the usefulness of fasting but there are also limits to it. Fasting can never expiate a sin; it may, on the contrary, serve to cover it up. A sinner is one who has committed a sin, but *papayoni* means one born of sin itself and therefore the most wicked of all sinners. We cannot say to whom this notion first occurred, but everyone is assured of freedom through total surrender to the Lord. Expiation of sin consists in *bhakti*. Fasting may seem necessary sometimes as a means of filling the heart with *bhakti*, and everyone may decide for himself when it is so. The real means, however, is *bhakti*, and *bhakti* means reducing oneself to a cipher, erasing the 'I'. If we can do this, no matter how many our sins in the past, they will not stand in the way of our freedom. The thoroughly wicked mentioned in this chapter are none else but ourselves. We, who commit all manner of sins in our hearts and move in the world as respectable people, are sinners, all of us, and in this chapter the Lord holds out an assurance to us.

Chapter XIV contains a description of the three *gunas* and Chapter XV a description of *Purushottama*[1]. Thirty years ago I read Drummond's[2] book in which he had established by means of several examples that the rules of the material world apply to the spiritual world also. We see it proved in this world which is made of the three *gunas*. There are not three *gunas* but many; those three are the major divisions of the many. He who transcends those three becomes one with *Purushottama*. None has been born

[1] The Supreme Being

[2] Dr. Henry Drummond, author of *The Natural Law in the Spiritual World* and *The Greatest Thing in the World*

in this world who could exist with only one *guna*. Even if a man possesses a high degree of the *sattvik guna*, the latter still includes something of the *gunas* of *tamas* and *rajas*. The example of water occurs to me. In the form of ice, it remains like a stone. But when it boils and becomes steam, it rises in the sky. As ice it lacks the capacity to rise, but as steam, it ascends higher and higher. Its highest power appears in the form of steam. And finally, ceasing to be steam, it becomes a cloud and benefits the world in the form of rain. However, if steam becomes ice, it lies dead and still. Ice too has its uses. Melted ice flows in the form of rivers. It also causes floods but we are not concerned with that. It is a proven fact that without the sun, even water cannot turn into steam. But that shows that it cannot do without someone else's help. The long and short of what I want to say is that steam points to a state of *moksha*. It benefits the world in its state of *moksha*. This is how we should understand the meaning of these two chapters.

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

332. *ARTICLES ON COW-PROTECTION*

The following are the details[1] regarding the Rs. 150/- received from Dhulia as aid towards publishing the articles on cow-protection.

In addition, the *Navajivan* has received Rs. 50-8-0, details[2] of which are given below:

The publication of this book will now be taken up early. However, those wishing to serve the cause of cow-protection should bear it in mind that more money received by way of aid will bring down the selling price of the book.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-1-1928

[1] & [2] Not translated here

333. THE EFFICACY OF MUD

In my book on health and hygiene[1] I wrote at length on the use of mud in treating ailments. Having read it, Shri Vithaldas Purushottam who has been giving a trial to this treatment writes to say:[2]

On reading this, I asked him to enlighten me about his own experience whereupon he wrote the following letter[3]:

The suggestions put forward in both these letters may be freely utilized in treating many ailments. I am of the opinion that mud cannot be placed directly on the skin where there is an open wound or the skin has peeled off. It can certainly be applied in this manner on the lower part of the abdomen and those who do not benefit by using a pack of mud wrapped up in cloth may certainly place it directly over the skin. Even at present, I am experimenting with mud in ordinary cases and am getting good results. This remedy is so simple, inexpensive and so easy that everyone could make use of it within limits. True, the treatment of placing mud on the abdomen can be carried out only on an empty stomach. One should also remember that the mud should always be taken from a clean place. Ice is used for headache or fever; in such cases, mud is generally more efficacious than ice.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 8-1-1928

[1] "General Knowledge about Health" (*vide* Vols. XI and XII.); later published in book form.

[2] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had written that mud treatment was quite effective even in ailments like appendicitis and that he had personal experience in the matter.

[3] Not translated here

334. LETTER TO RAJA OF KANIKA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 8, 1928

DEAR FRIEND,

I was sorry that during my recent tour in Utkal I was not able to visit your Raj and see for myself whether there was anything in the allegations made to me about the oppression of the ryots. These allegations were vehemently repeated by many people during the tour. But I have said nothing about them before putting myself in communication with you once more. Could you entertain the idea of a representative being sent to find me the truth about the allegations?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

THE RAJA OF KANIKA

From a microfilm: S.N. 13035

335. LETTER TO W. H. PITT

[*January 8, 1928*][1]

DEAR MR. PITT,

I wonder if you received a letter[2] to you now some weeks ago inquiring whether any headway was being made with the matters of Tiruvarppu and Suchindram? I am having constant inquiry.

M. K. GANDHI

COMMISSIONER OF POLICE
TRIVANDRUM

From a microfilm: S.N. 13035A

[1] This letter is drafted on the reverse of the preceding item which is dated 8-1-1928.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to W. H. Pitt", 14-10-1927.

336. MESSAGE TO JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA[1]

[Before *January 9, 1928*]

MY DEAR PROFESSORS AND BOYS,

Thakkar Saheb asks me to send you a message of hope, when the calamity in the death of Hakim Saheb has overtaken us. Let the deceased's spirit ever abide with us. Let us keep his memory for ever green by making the Jamia a living temple of unity. You must not lose hope. The Jamia cannot perish so long as the professors and the boys are true to it. For my part you have my promise that, God willing, I shall use all the powers that He may give me, for putting the institution on a sound financial basis.

With love,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Bombay Chronicle, 9-1-1928

337. TELEGRAM TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA[2]

[On or after *January 9, 1928*]

TIBBIA WELL PROVIDED. JAMIA BEING GROWING INSTITUTION REQUEST YOUR SUPPORT. REFERENCE UNITY THINK YOU ANSARI SHOULD TRAVEL HOLD JOINT MEETINGS PASS RESOLUTIONS DELHI OTHER PLACES. OTHERS MAY ALSO BE SENT ELSEWHERE SAME ERRAND. YOU MAY COMMENCE WITH BENARES.

GANDHI

Show me the clean copy before despatch. This telegram to be sent by the carriage that will presently come. If it does not, then it only be sent to Sabarmati.[3]

From a photostat: S.N. 14905

[1] This was read out at a meeting of the staff and students of the Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, held to mourn the death of Hakim Ajmal Khan.

[2] In reply to the following telegram received from the addressee on January 9: "Thanks for letter. Lala Sultansingh of Delhi met me Calcutta told me Jamia Islamia would not appeal Hindus. Tibbia College will agree with this opinion but I will support whatever you decide. What do you propose regarding Hindu-Muslim work? Agree should not delay action."

[3] These were evidently instructions to a secretary.

338. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI

SABARMATI,
January 10, 1928

MY DEAR BHRRR,

Yes, Hakim Saheb's death is a serious national loss. Let us hope the nation will turn it to good account.

Wednesday or Thursday between 3.5 p.m. will quite suit me.

With love,

BHRRR

From a photostat: S.N. 9561

339. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL N. CHOKSI

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
Monday [January 10, 1928][1]

BHAISHRI NAJUKLAL,

It is good that you have started the mud-pack treatment. After moistening the earth once, you need not do it again. If the pack dries up and if it is still necessary to continue the application, you may prepare another pack. If the pack is about an inch thick, it does not dry up. A pack applied on the stomach at night remains damp the whole night. One applied on the head during the noon is likely to dry up. Never put a pack on the stomach during the day, because the process of digestion is going on then. My experience about fragrant, i.e., clean red earth is good, but you may use black earth if you can get only that. The only thing is that it should be clean.

You should be careful about two things only as regards blood-pressure. You should not overwork either physically or mentally, and the motion must always be clear. If you do not have a clear motion every day, take an enema or a laxative. Never strain. Eat very light food. One need not worry about blood-pressure at all, if there is no other complaint. Since, however, you have had an attack of paralysis, you should certainly be careful. In addition

[1] As entered in the source; however, January 10 was a Tuesday.

to what you are doing, you may certainly take the injections, if advised by the doctor, since they have helped you. The headache should certainly be cured by the mud-pack. Even for this purpose, however, the stomach should be light.

Prabodh seems to be a very fine boy. May God fulfil all our hopes about him.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12143

340. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI[1]

SABARMATI,
January 11, 1928

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have your sweet letter. It reminded me of the head master in Tiruppur who, having been your pupil, told me that you were as much master of Sanskrit as of English. I did not know this. I have read Valmiki only in translation and that indifferently. It is Tulsidas I swear by. But I admit all you say and would yet hold that Sita did go to the forest in spite of Rama's wish to the contrary. And in doing so, she excelled herself. Similarly did Rama excel himself in carrying out the promise of Dasharatha. But I am arguing to no purpose. For we are alone in the homage we owe to Rama and Sita.

I am watching your movements and prize copies of your letters to Sir Mohammad Habibullah[2].

You will have to prolong your stay if you are to put your great work on a sure foundation. Please do.

With love,

M. K. GANDHI

Letters of Srinivasa Sastri, p. 171

[1] The following is an extract from a letter from Sastri to T. N. Jagadisan (1940): "Gandhi's letter to me on the *Ramayana* question is really in his best style. I was in South Africa at the time. In a speech to women in Travancore State, he had told them that Sita disobeyed her husband in following him to the forest, and that a husband's order could therefore be set aside when there was sufficient cause. I wrote protesting against the obvious misreading of Valmiki. . . ."

[2] Member, Viceroy's Executive Council and leader of the Indian delegation which went to South Africa in November, 1926; *vide* Vol. XXXIII.

341. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

January 11, 1928

DEAR SATIS BABU,

I have your letter. It would be enough if the Maulana can secure you more custom.

Love,

BAPU

SJT. SATIS BABU
KHADI PRATISHTHAN
CALCUTTA

From a photostat: G.N. 1581

342. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, SABARMATI[1]

[Before *January 12, 1928*]

I have to give you this evening an instance of a folly of which three of us have an equal share. Or rather my share is the biggest inasmuch as I, as the head of the Ashram, am expected to be much more vigilant than anyone of you.

Many of us could not imagine what this would be. But he narrated it in vivid and, as he is wont to describe his mistakes, in exaggerated detail. Those who have seen Gandhiji's room in the Ashram will remember that between the wall which faces the river and the roof there is a piece of lattice work. It is meant for ventilation, but it also lets in the sun's rays straight on Gandhiji's face. So he asked one of us to put something there as a screen. This friend asked another who immediately brought in the carpenter with a board. He naturally thought a shutter would be better than a screen, and asked if Gandhiji would like it. Gandhiji agreed, but soon after the carpenter began his work, he seemed to have perceived that he had not done the right thing. . . .

Now this is not what we who are pledged to poverty may do. It ought to have occurred to me that a piece of cardboard or a piece of cloth would serve as well as this shutter which costs a couple of rupees and three hours' labour for the carpenter. The

[1] From Mahadev Desai's article "The Week", which reported the speech under the caption "The Poor in Spirit"

cardboard or the piece of old cloth would have cost nothing and anyone could have fixed it there with a couple of nails. It is in these simple little things that our creed is tested. The Kingdom of Heaven is for those who are poor in spirit. Let us therefore learn at every step to reduce our needs and wants to the terms of the poor and try to be truly poor in spirit.

Young India, 12-1-1928

343. SPEECH ON HUMILITY[1]

SABARMATI,
[Before *January 12, 1928*]

Well, I do not remember the exact words of the song. But no one can forget the substance of the song. It is not only the music, but the substance that has been haunting me the whole day. You do not come to prayer to listen to music, or to admire this man's or that man's voice, but in order that you may carry with you for the day something from what you hear to guide and inspire you in all your actions. If we do not do so, all our prayers would be like sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. What a great song was today's! Kabir, in his homely telling way, has described the treasures of the humble. It is not he that exalteth himself, but he that humbleth himself that shall see God, says Kabir. We have to be humble like the ant and not proud like the elephant.

Young India, 12-1-1928

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of a prayer meeting

I must not be accused of begging the question. For, if I were told that it is Indian independence that is desired, it is possible to show that no two persons will give the same definition. The fact of the matter is that we do not know our distant goal. It will be determined not by our definitions but by our acts, voluntary and involuntary. If we are wise, we will take care of the present and the future will take care of itself. God has given us only a limited sphere of action and a limited vision. Sufficient unto the day is the good thereof.

I submit that swaraj is an all-satisfying goal for all time. We the English-educated Indians often unconsciously make the terrible mistake of thinking that the microscopic minority of English-speaking Indians is the whole of India. I defy anyone to give for independence a common Indian word intelligible to the masses. Our goal at any rate may be known by an indigenous word understood of the three hundred millions. And we have such a word in 'swaraj' first used in the name of the nation by Dadabhai Naoroji.[1] It is infinitely greater than and includes independence. It is a vital word. It has been sanctified by the noble sacrifices of thousands of Indians. It is a word which, if it has not penetrated the remotest corner of India, has at least got the largest currency of any similar word. It is a sacrilege to displace that word by a foreign importation of doubtful value. This Independence Resolution is perhaps the final reason for conducting Cogress proceedings in Hindustani and that alone. No tragedy like that of the Independence Resolution would then have been possible. The most valiant speakers would then have ornamented the native meaning of the word 'swaraj' and attempted all kinds of definitions, glorious and inglorious. Would that the independents would profit by their experience and resolve henceforth to work among the masses for whom they desire freedom and taboo English speech in its entirety in so far as mass meetings such as the Congress are concerned.

Personally, I crave not for 'independence', which I do not understand, but I long for freedom from the English yoke. I would pay any price for it. I would accept chaos in exchange for it. For the English peace is the peace of the grave. Anything would be better than this living death of a whole people. This Satanic rule has well-nigh ruined this fair land materially, morally and spiritually. I daily see its law-courts denying justice and murder-

[1] In his presidential address at the Calcutta Congress in 1906, Dadabhai Naoroji used the word 'swaraj' as a synonym for 'self-government'.

ing truth. I have just come from terrorized Orissa. This rule is using my own countrymen for its sinful sustenance. I have a number of affidavits swearing that, in the district of Khurda, acknowledgments of enhancement of revenue are being forced from the people practically at the point of the bayonet. The unparalleled extravagance of this rule has demented the Rajas and the Maharajas who, unmindful of consequences, ape it and grind their subjects to dust. In order to protect its immoral commerce, this rule regards no means too mean, and in order to keep three hundred millions under the heels of a hundred thousand, it carries a military expenditure which is keeping millions in a state of semi-starvation and polluting thousands of mouths with intoxicating liquor.

But my creed is non-violence under all circumstances. My method is conversion, not coercion; it is self-suffering, not the suffering of the tyrant. I know that method to be infallible. I know that a whole people can adopt it without accepting it as its creed and without understanding its philosophy. People generally do not understand the philosophy of all their acts. My ambition is much higher than independence. Through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so-called weaker races of the earth from the crushing heels of Western exploitation in which England is the greatest partner. If India converts, as it can convert, Englishmen, it can become the predominant partner in a world commonwealth of which England can have the privilege of becoming a partner if she chooses. India has the right, if she only knew, of becoming the predominant partner by reason of her numbers, geographical position and culture inherited for ages. This is big talk, I know. For a fallen India to aspire to move the world and protect weaker races is seemingly an impertinence. But in explaining my strong opposition to this cry for independence, I can no longer hide the light under a bushel. Mine is an ambition worth living for and worth dying for. In no case do I want to reconcile myself to a state lower than the best for fear of consequences. It is, therefore, not out of expedience that I oppose independence as my goal. I want India to come to her own and that state cannot be better defined by any single word than 'swaraj'. Its content will vary with the action that the nation is able to put forth at a given moment. India's coming to her own will mean every nation doing likewise.

Young India, 12-1-1928

346. TAKING UNLAWFUL LIBERTY

A Sindhi friend writes:

> I am enclosing herewith a cutting from the *Sind Observer* of Karachi wherein you will find your name among others used in support of medicines sought to be popularized and sold through the medium of such advertisements.
>
> I can hardly believe you could have spoken or written appreciatively of the medicines, mixtures, pills or potions of the pharmacy in question.
>
> I hope you would write in *Young India* about this matter.

I have seen the advertisement too. It is taking an unlawful liberty with my name and, I doubt not, the names of other leaders. It is remarkable the freedom these pharmacies take in order to find custom for their wretched traffic. In my opinion this use of names of persons without their permission is an illegality punishable in law. Since, as a non-co-operator, I may not seek the protection of the law, I must be satisfied with warning the public against being misled by the use of my name in connection with any drug whatsoever. My disbelief in drugs in general is as strong as ever notwithstanding the very limited use by me in recent times of one or two comparatively harmless and well-known opening drugs and quinine. I have no desire to see pharmacies multiplied in this country, I would rather see people freed from the slavery of drugs.

Young India, 12-1-1928

347. MADRAS KHADI EXHIBITION

Mr. Polak being in Madras during the Congress Week, I invited him to visit the Khadi Exhibition and give me his criticism. He has now sent me a letter from which I take the following extract[1]:

Though the criticism is not a considered opinion it will be useful to the organizers of future exhibitions. I do not share the view that educated Indians will not patronize khadi unless they have it supplied to them on the same terms as machine-made

[1] Not reproduced here. Polak had criticized the Exhibition for the bad site and defective arrangements.

cloth as to price, quality, durability, etc. Whilst they do expect a particular standard to satisfy their artistic taste, they are gladly paying extra cost, and are by no means insistent on equality with machine-made cloth in point of quality.

The knowledge that khadi supports the poorest of the land who would otherwise be without such support is a great determining factor with the educated and well-to-do classes in buying khadi. But that of course is no reason for khadi producers to be remiss in their attempt to improve the quality. Indeed the advance made in this direction is highly encouraging. The workers are not going to be contented with anything less than the excellence that khadi had when there was no machine-made cloth and which no machine has been yet able even to equal.

Young India, 12-1-1928

348. MUKUNDAN'S PENANCE

One of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari's ambitions seems to be to write touching stories for *Young India*. The one that follows has like all his stories a moral behind it. This one is an 'untouchable' story[1]. May it melt some stony 'touchable' heart!

Young India, 12-1-1928

349. MYSORE GOVERNMENT'S KHADI CENTRE

The Mysore Government have taken up an experiment in khadi production and have started work in real earnest at a centre called Badanval, taking advantage of help from the A.I.S.A. in regard to workers and plan of work. Sjt. Rajagopalachari has received a letter from one of the workers from which the following interesting account of progress of work is extracted.[2] It shows how easily khadi spreads if the work is started on right lines in rural areas where the need for a supplementary occupation is keenly felt.

Young India, 12-1-1928

[1] Not reproduced here

[2] The extracts are not reproduced here.

350. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

[Before *January 15, 1928*][1]

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I got your letters.

Only today I had a letter from Akola which gives the news of Sushila's miscarriage. Manilal has written neither to Ba nor me about it. There should be no shyness or hesitation in writing to me about such matters. It will not help you to keep back such things from me because of my views about them. In any case, I would come to know about the thing indirectly. I might feel hurt for a moment. People may hold the same views as I do about this matter and yet not be able to refrain from indulgence. If they could, would they ever marry? The wish to marry comes from the desire for self-gratification. Our *rishis*, however, tried to make marriage a means of learning self-restraint, or say that they regulated through marriage a relationship which was unregulated. But man is more inclined towards self-gratification and he turned marriage also into another means of self-gratification. However, from a couple like you I can expect nothing more than that you should remain vigilant and constantly strive for self-control. There is, therefore, no need for you to keep me ignorant about the fruits of marriage.

Sushila must be better now. If after a miscarriage proper treatment is taken, its harmful effects can be controlled. You may trust me that one such treatment, and a very effective one, is the Kuhne Bath. It removes the cause of miscarriage and makes future deliveries easier and less painful. Sushila should have plain food and regular sleep, and should keep away from things that excite the body. I should like both of you to read Kuhne's book, as also Juste's. Dr John Nicholson's book, too, is worth reading.

The Ashram has started filling up and in two days it will be full. Nearly thirty persons are coming. Among them there will be twelve to fifteen Europeans too. Ramdas arrived today. Rami, Manu came yesterday. Devdas is still in Bombay taking treatment for one of his bones.

[1] It appears this letter was written before the Council of International Federation met in the Ashram; *vide* the succeeding item.

I do not know why you did not get the chapters of the *Gita*. I have finished the translation. I will tell Mahadev.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4728

351. DISCUSSION ON FELLOWSHIP[1]

[Before *January 15, 1928*]

In order to attain a perfect fellowship, every act of its members must be a religious act and an act of sacrifice. I came to the conclusion long ago, after prayerful search and study and discussion with as many people as I could meet, that all religions were true and also that all had some error in them, and that whilst I hold by my own, I should hold others as dear as Hinduism, from which it logically follows that we should hold all as dear as our nearest kith and kin and that we should make no distinction between them. So we can only pray, if we are Hindus, not that a Christian should become a Hindu, or if we are Mussalmans, not that a Hindu or a Christian should become a Mussalman, nor should we even secretly pray that anyone should be converted, but our inmost prayer should be that a Hindu should be a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim and a Christian a better Christian. That is the fundamental truth of fellowship. That is the meaning of the wonderful passion, the story of which Andrews read out to you, of the song and verses that Khare, Shastri and Imam Saheb recited. If Andrews invited them to give their song and verses for mere courtesy or by way of patronizing toleration, he was false to the fellowship. In that case, he should not have done so, but I have known Charlie Andrews too

[1] Members of the Council of International Federation and their friends stayed in the Ashram and held discussions on "the fundamental objective of the fellowship". Mahadev Desai in his article "The Week" under the caption "The Foundation of Fellowship" records: "The discussion lasted for two days . . . . It led to a free and frank exchange of views ultimately bound to establish a better understanding. . . . There was no difference of opinion as to the object of all to work for the widest toleration, to combine and side with the forces of light against the forces of darkness, or as Deenabandhu Andrews said, those who blankly leave God out and become materialists. Everyone seemed to be agreed on this, but many seemed to run away from what would appear to be the necessary corollary of the proposition. This was defined by Gandhiji at some length at this and other meetings. . . ."

well, and I know that he has given the same love to others as he has for his own, and thereby broadened his Christianity, as I broaden my Hinduism by loving other religions as my own. If however there is any suspicion in your minds that only one religion can be true and others false, you must reject the doctrine of fellowship placed before you. Then we would have a continuous process of exclusion and found our fellowship on an exclusive basis. Above all I plead for utter truthfulness. If we do not feel for other religions as we feel for our own, we had better disband ourselves, for we do not want a wishy-washy toleration. My doctrine of toleration does not include toleration of evil, though it does the toleration of the evil-minded. It does not therefore mean that you have to invite each and every one who is evil-minded or tolerate a false faith. By a true faith I mean one the sum total of whose energy is for the good of its adherents, by a false I mean that which is predominantly false. If you, therefore, feel that the sum total of Hinduism has been bad for the Hindus and the world, you must reject it as a false faith.

Gandhiji's insistence on a member of the fellowship not even secretly wishing that a member of another faith should be converted to his own led to a general discussion on the question of conversion. Gandhiji again defined his position more clearly than before:

I would not only not try to convert but would not even secretly pray that anyone should embrace my faith. My prayer would always be that Imam Saheb should be a better Mussalman, or become the best he can. Hinduism with its message of ahimsa is to me the most glorious religion in the world—as my wife to me is the most beautiful woman in the world—but others may feel the same about their own religion. Cases of real honest conversion are quite possible. If some people for their inward satisfaction and growth change their religion, let them do so. As regards taking our message to the aborigines, I do not think I should go and give my message out of my own wisdom. Do it in all humility, it is said. Well, I have been an unfortunate witness of arrogance often going in the garb of humility. If I am perfect, I know that my thought will reach others. It taxes all my time to reach the goal I have set to myself. What have I to take to the aborigines and the Assamese hillmen except to go in my nakedness to them? Rather than ask them to join my prayer, I would join their prayer. We were strangers to this sort of classification—"animists", "aborigines", etc.,—but we have learnt it from English rulers. I must have the desire to serve and it

must put me right with people. Conversion and service go ill together.

The next day early morning the friends met for an informal conversation with Gandhiji when again the same question was asked by many of them.

"Would you have a ruling of such a character that those who had a desire to convert should not be eligible for membership?"

Personally, I think they should not be eligible. I should have framed a resolution to that effect as I regard it as the logical outcome of fellowship. It is essential for inter-religious relationship and contact.

"Is not the impulse to proselytize God-given?", inquired another friend.

I question it. But if all impulses are God-given, as some of our Hindus believe, He has also given us discrimination. He will say, 'I have given you many impulses so that your capacity to face temptation may be tested.'

"But you do believe in preaching an economic order?", inquired one of the fair sex.

I do, as I believe in preaching laws of health.

Then why not apply the same rule in religious matters?

It is a relevant question. But you must not forget that we have started with the fundamental principle that all religions are true. If there were different but good and true health laws for different communities, I should hesitate to preach some as true and some as false. I am positive that, with people not prepared to tolerate one another's religious belief, there can be no international fellowship.

Moreover, physical analogies when applied to spiritual matters are good only up to a certain point. When you take up an analogy from Nature, you can stretch it only to a certain point. But I would take an illustration from the physical world and explain what I mean. If I want to hand a rose to you, there is definite movement. But if I want to transmit its scent, I do so without any movement. The rose transmits its own scent without a movement. Let us rise a step higher, and we can understand that spiritual experiences are self-acting. Therefore, the analogy of preaching sanitation, etc., does not hold good. If we have spiritual truth, it will transmit itself. You talk of the joy of a spiritual experience and say you cannot but share it. Well, if it is real joy, boundless joy, it will spread itself without the vehicle of speech. In spiritual matters we have merely to step out of the

way. Let God work His way. If we interfere, we may do harm. Good is a self-acting force. Evil is not, because it is a negative force. It requires the cloak of virtue before it can march forward.

Did not Jesus Himself teach and preach?

We are on dangerous ground here. You ask me to give my interpretation of the life of Christ. Well, I may say that I do not accept everything in the gospels as historical truth. And it must be remembered that he was working amongst his own people, and said he had not come to destroy but to fulfil. I draw a great distinction between the Sermon on the Mount and the Letters of Paul. They are a graft on Christ's teaching, his own gloss apart from Christ's own experience.

Young India, 19-1-1928

352. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

Sunday [On or before *January 15, 1928*][1]

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. I shall come there on the 24th or 25th. But I understand that they will take me directly to Vartej. Aren't you coming to Porbandar? Isn't there any remedy to put your health right. Mine is all right. One cannot rely upon newspapers even about this.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5905

[1] Gandhiji was in Vartej on January 23, 24, 1928 to lay the foundation-stone of a temple for untouchables.

353. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 15, 1928

DEAR SATIS BABU,

I remember Akhil Babu well. I am writing to him about the accident to his wife. I remember the incident you refer to. I have always liked him. Whilst I accepted Monmohan Babu's repudiation, I thought none the worse of Akhil Babu. What you now say about Monmohan Babu certainly makes me sad.

Dr. Ray has sent me two letters. In the first he refers to khadi admiringly and in the second he declares his firm faith in it and looks forward to Jamnalalji's visit. If I can, I shall send you copies of the letters.

I am glad Hemaprabha Devi is cheerful now. It is strange Tarini should still be unwell. Can he not conduct his researches in a better climate?

With love,

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1582

354. SPEECH AT CONVOCATION OF GUJARAT VIDYAPITH

January 15, 1928

Deenabandhu Andrews[1] is not only a good Englishman who has sacrificed everything for this country; he is also an artist, poet and fluent orator. Those who have studied his speeches and his deeds can realize that there is art in whatever he does. He is a poet because he understands what the future should be and what it may be. He is a fluent orator, not because he can speak volubly or because his style and pronunciation are excellent, but because all his words flow from his heart. One may form a certain impression on reading his speeches, but they must have made a different impression on his immediate listeners. Ordinarily we take

[1] C. F. Andrews delivered the convocation address.

it that one who can speak continuously for hours together is a fluent orator. Some may think that Mr. Andrews read out a written speech because he could not speak extempore. But it would be foolish to think so. He made his written speech so interesting that we got completely engrossed in it. It was so absorbingly interesting because his speech came straight from his heart.

He referred in his speech to the late Hakim Saheb. On a superficial view one may wonder what a convocation address has to do with the death of Hakim Saheb; referencc to it would show a lack of artistic sense! I feel that in this very thing he has revealed his artistic skill and has achieved his aim. Andrews is quite old compared to you. He talked about his childhood. He spoke of the beginning of his training under Hakim Saheb. Hakim Saheb had become a well-known physician, and used to serve the rich and the poor through his knowledge of medicine; then it was that Andrews realized that he was taking training from him. He spoke from his own experience and said that he did not remember the lectures delivered by his teachers, but the greatest and the holiest thing he remembered was how one of his teachers whose memory he cherished was able to penetrate his heart. It was to show this very purpose of education that he narrated the story of Hakim Ajmal Khan. Therein lies wonderful art. Compassion is certainly there in it. And while reading his speech he made us taste the sentiment of courage and in the end taught self-sacrifice.

Moreover, he narrated the story of his own life. Our hearts have sunk into the vale of despondency and though at present we have these buildings we apprehend that perhaps two years hence only pigeons might haunt them. He understands this feeling of anxiety. I have not told him about this, but he is able to smell it in the air around us. Therefore he said to you, "You have buildings, money and land; you will go on receiving money in a province like Gujarat. But if I tell the origin of the college in which I had studied, you will be surprised and you will see a ray of hope, because it was started in a mere small cottage and that too by a brave widow, who had lost her husband on the very day of her marriage. She could have remarried, but she dedicated herself to the religion of service. She found out saints and sadhus and asked them to give education to students; she had huts built for them to stay in. From those very huts developed the present great Pembroke College which gave us poets like Spencer and Gray, outstanding statesmen like Pitt and philosophers like Browne." He has tried to comfort you by saying that his own college and your college have had a similar history, that if you

work in patience your college too can produce great men. And the remedy that he has suggested is self-confidence. It is born of faith in God and patience. The finest things cannot be produced all at once. The seed-tree remains hidden in the ground and a big strong tree takes long years to grow. But the gardener knows that the tree will take its own time to grow, that he has to let the grass grow on the ground. The gardener does not get disheartened, because he knows. Andrews does not expect such knowledge from us, but he expects faith. He placed before us the definition of faith in the Bible, faith is the evidence of things not seen. If you have such faith, then the Vidyapith will never collapse. The Vidyapith has not taken as many years to grow as Pembroke. You may well say: 'Here is our achievement; fifteen kumar mandirs[1] have been disaffiliated! And that some more may yet be disaffiliated!' But if you have faith you will not be disheartened. The kumar mandirs had to be disaffiliated because we would not bend, we insisted on our conditions and said: "If you wish the affiliation to continue, the students must spin; otherwise it will be terminated." A day may come when no one would stay here; only the chancellor would be sitting, he would be the teacher and the student; a spinning-wheel would be in front of him; then he may have a visitor; but if no one comes, monkeys at any rate would come and if he has faith he would speak to them like Vaidarbhi[2] and find comfort. What is the evidence of my faith? The only evidence is that it does exist. If anyone asks you then you may refer him to the one who is never tired of speaking about the spinning-wheel. If you have that much faith, then according to Andrews you can create not one but a thousand Pembrokes here. How can you compare England with India, a country which can hold many Englands within it? But do we have such courage? Do we have such patience? Without courage and patience, faith cannot be fruitful. We must always adhere to our principles and have confidence. We do not wish to behave like a deceitful businessman. He fixes the price and prepares the packets after seeing the customer. If we yield this much, then students will come; let us then be that much lenient. This kind of business will benefit neither the public nor the Vidyapith. If the teachers have faith, then they will speak with one voice. Even the student will chime in and say: 'What does it matter even if I am left alone, the teachers will pass on to me every-

[1] Boys' schools

[2] Damayanti, wife of King Nala, in the *Mahabharata*

thing that they have. God is one, but in His creation there is infinite variety.' Thus, if one student, though all alone, cultivates fearlessness, there will be a hundred to follow him. That is the substance of Andrews's speech, the burden of his song.

You may take his speech as mine. Be proud of your college, cherish the Vidyapith and enlighten your life. Wherever you may be, remember the Vidyapith. Soon you will know what turn it will take in the future, but I want you to wait with faith and patience and I promise you that, so long as any one of us is alive, we will not let the Vidyapith close down. I am ready to die, to be buried alive, if the Vidyapith lives. If you can bear the austerities of the Vidyapith, then rest assured that it will always offer a shelter for you; but if you cannot, do not blame me or the teacher but blame your fate. But if we fail to fulfil our pledge, then I must tell you that, although we are wedded to non-violence, you have the right to kill us.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 22-1-1928

355. MESSAGE TO SECOND GRADUATES' CONFERENCE

January 16, 1928

I regret I am not able to participate in the gathering of the Graduates' Association[1]. I hope that the graduates will make the Association a potent instrument of service and, while bringing credit to it as well as to themselves, will make substantial contribution to the *yajna* of our motherland.

[From Gujarati]
Sabarmati, Vol. VI, Issue 4

[1] Of Gujarat Vidyapith

356. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU[1]

THE ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 17, 1928

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I must dictate and save time and give rest to my aching shoulder. I wrote to you on Sunday about Fenner Brockway.[2] I hope you got that letter in due time.

Do you know that it was because you were the chief partner in the transactions referred to that I wrote the articles[3] you have criticized, except of course about the so-called 'All-India Exhibition'? I felt a kind of safety that, in view of the relations between you and me, my writings would be taken in the spirit in which they were written. However, I see that they were a misfire all round. I do not mind it. For, it is evident that the articles alone could deliver you from the self-suppression under which you have been labouring apparently for so many years. Though I was beginning to detect some differences in viewpoint between you and me, I had no notion whatsoever of the terrible extent of these differences. Whilst you were heroically suppressing yourself for the sake of the nation and in the belief that by working with and under me in spite of yourself, you would serve the nation and come out scatheless, you were chafing under the burden of this unnatural self-suppression. And, while you were in that state, you overlooked the very things which appear to you now as my serious blemishes. I could show you from the pages of *Young India* equally strong articles written by me, when I was actively guiding the Congress with reference to the doings of the All-India Congress Committee. I have spoken similarly at the All-India Congress Committee meetings whenever there has been irresponsible and hasty talk or action. But whilst you were under stupefaction these things did not jar on you as they do now. And it seems to me, therefore, useless to show you the discrepancies in your letter. What I am now concerned with is future action.

[1] In reply to the addressee's letter, dated 11-1-1928; *vide* Appendix X.

[2] The letter is not available.

[3] *Vide* "The National Congress", 5-1-1928 and "Independence *v.* Swaraj", 12-1-1928.

If any freedom is required from me, I give you all the freedom you may need from the humble, unquestioning allegiance that you have given to me for all these years and which I value all the more for the knowledge I have now gained of your state. I see quite clearly that you must carry on open warfare against me and my views. For, if I am wrong I am evidently doing irreparable harm to the country and it is your duty after having known it to rise in revolt against me. Or, if you have any doubt as to the correctness of your conclusion, I shall gladly discuss them with you personally. The differences between you and me appear to me to be so vast and radical that there seems to be no meeting-ground between us. I can't conceal from you my grief that I should lose a comrade so valiant, so faithful, so able and so honest as you have always been; but in serving a cause, comradeships have got to be sacrificed. The cause must be held superior to all such considerations. But this dissolution of comradeship—if dissolution must come—in no way affects our personal intimacy. We have long become members of the same family, and we remain such in spite of grave political differences. I have the good fortune to enjoy such relations with several people. To take Sastri for instance, he and I differ in the political outlook as poles asunder, but the bond between him and me that sprung up before we knew the political differences has persisted and survived the fiery ordeals it had to go through.

I suggest a dignified way of unfurling your banner. Write to me a letter for publication showing your differences. I will print it in *Young India* and write a brief reply. Your first letter I destroyed after reading and replying to it, the second I am keeping, and if you do not want to take the trouble of writing another letter, I am prepared to publish the letter that is before me. I am not aware of any offensive passage in it. But if I find any, you may depend upon my removing every such passage. I consider that letter to be a frank and honest document.

With love,

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 13040; also *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 56-8

357. LETTER TO R. RAMACHANDRA RAO[1]

THE ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 17, 1928

DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter is proof of the fact that a leopard cannot change his spots. I detected in it the old Collector parrying blows and making out a plausible case out of indifferent material. Let me take an analogy. The floor space that the English rulers occupy in India is infinitesimal, their numbers still more infinitesimal compared to the teeming millions. There are more "natives" in the Government employ than Englishmen. According to your reasoning, Englishmen will be able to call their rule therefore swadeshi rule. And yet you and I would repudiate any such preposterous claim. And it was certainly very clever of you to have 62 thousand square feet allotted to khadi part of the indigenous thing. Whilst I was glad that khadi was outside the elephantine court, it was disgraceful if what I was told by reliable men was true, namely, that the Government had stipulated that khadi should be outside that court. And, is it proper for you to say that I 'permitted' the exhibition of foreign textiles? Do you not recall the very great reluctance with which, when I heard of the proposed exhibition of foreign textiles, I consented to hold the Khadi Exhibition? Do you not remember that I did not care to have the Khadi Exhibition at all during the Congress Week? I yielded only because you, an old friend, were insistent that I should hold the Khadi Exhibition and told me that you would be embarrassed if I did not hold it. After I gave you my consent to hold it, I received letters of protest, but having given my word, I did not wish to withdraw.

If this does not satisfy you and if your letter was written for the public eye, I would gladly print it and reply.

I need hardly assure you that in all I have written I had nothing personal against you. You were but one of the parties to the performance which in the present chaos is nothing extraordinary. I would even have kept silent but for the fear of the

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's letter of January 9 in which he had refuted Gandhiji's criticism of the Exhibition put up at the Congress Session at Madras as being anti-Indian; *vide* "The National Congress", 5-1-1928.

same thing being repeated at the next Congress. Of course, it may be repeated in spite of my warning and protest. If it is, I shall not accuse myself of cowardice.

Yours sincerely,

DEWAN BAHADUR R. RAMACHANDRA RAO, B. A., C.S.I.
SECRETARY, THE A.I.A.I.K. AND ARTS EXHIBITION
MADRAS CENTRAL URBAN BANK
MYLAPORE

From a microfilm: S.N. 13041

358. LETTER TO S. GANESAN

THE ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 17, 1928

MY DEAR GANESAN,

I had your telegram. I must not reply by wire. The whole of the translation of the History of Satyagraha[1] is now ready. You gave me the date when you could commence the printing, I want you to give me the date when you can finish. Please, therefore, give me the absolute date when you can get the History ready for sale. It must be all bound in khaddar cloth or it may be paper cover. Do not take this thing up unless you can cope with it both in point of time and finance. I am in a hurry to see the History out; for, without it I am hampered in writing the biographical chapters[2].

As for *Self-restraint* v. *Self-indulgence*[3], paper has already been bought and resetting has already commenced.

Please be quick and precise about this letter. I may tell you that you have not yet regained your lost prestige with Swami Anand and it is a pity. For, until you get that, it is difficult for me to help you as much as I want to.

You are printing Mr. Gregg's essay on hand-spinning. Please tell me when it is likely to be published.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 13042

[1] *Satyagraha in South Africa*; *vide* Vol. XXIX.

[2] Of the Autobiography; *vide* Vol. XXXIX.

[3] This was a collection of Gandhiji's writings on self-control, *brahmacharya*, birth-control, etc., and included a series of articles published in *Young India* under the title "Towards Moral Bankruptcy"; *vide* Vol. XXXI.

359. TELEGRAM TO DEWAN OF PORBANDAR

SABARMATI,
January 18, 1928

DEWAN SAHEB
PORBANDAR

AM GRATEFUL HIS HIGHNESS INVITATION. SHALL BE ACCOMPANIED BY PARTY OF TWENTY INCLUDING PRESIDENT PARISHAD[1] AND SEVERAL LADIES. ARRANGEMENTS HANDS RECEPTION COMMITTEE. MAY I ASK YOU CONSULT COMMITTEE?

GANDHI

From a microfilm: MMU. XX. 25

360. LETTER TO S. D. NADKARNI

THE ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 18, 1928

DEAR FRIEND,

I had your letter. I have kept some of your letters in my *Young India* file yet for use.[2]

About the proposed *smriti*, I cannot yet see eye to eye with you. You often seem to emphasize the letter rather than the spirit. When I use the word 'inspired', I do not give it a technical meaning. When I feel 'inspired', you will find that nothing would deter me from giving a new *smriti* to Hinduism, and let me secretly tell you that I am aiming at such inspiration. Till then I must wait.

It gave me much pleasure to be able to see you face to face in Madras.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. S. D. NADKARNI

From a photostat: S.N. 13043

[1] Kathiawar Political Conference
[2] *Vide* Vol. XXXVI, "Correspondence", 16-2-1928.

361. LETTER TO RATILAL

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 18, 1928

BHAISHRI RATILAL,

I have sent you a wire. I got today a letter from Chi. Devdas in which he tells me that you are very unhappy. I can understand it. But you must have patience. I did not know about Sakubhai's children, etc. I know that he has left a big family. You are the only one who can give them courage. Birth and death are inseparable; why, then, should we rejoice at the former and mourn the latter? We shall have done our best if we do our duty and, when our own time comes, meet death with a smiling face. Be calm.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7161

362. A LETTER

January 18, 1928

BHAI . . .[1]

As long as the very sight of . . .[2] disturbs you, avoid even looking at her. All this must not be forced. Talk to me about this at the Ashram.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 1639. Courtesy: Ramaniklal Modi

[1] & [2] Names are omitted.

363. *AJMAL JAMIA FUND*

I have now heard from Dr. Ansari regarding the fund to be raised in memory of the late Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and for the purpose of putting the Muslim National University on a firm footing. Dr. Ansari authorizes me to say that he and Principal Zakir Husain join me in making this appeal. Sheth Jamnalalji Bajaj has consented to be the treasurer of the Fund. In the existing raw state of feeling between Hindus and Mussalmans, it has not been thought advisable to issue this appeal under many names. But our hope is that all those who revere the deceased's memory and who approve of the idea of connecting the proposed memorial with the National Muslim University will help the movement as if they were joint partners in this appeal.

In my humble opinion, it is the duty of Hindus and Mussalmans who believe in unity to perpetuate Hakim Saheb's memory in the tangible form proposed. It is their duty to ensure the stability of the Jamia, for it was a creation of the times when it was thought that the two communities were united for ever. And if the non-co-operating national colleges do not stand for, work for and finally ensure unity, nothing else can or will. I hope, therefore, that all the lovers of unity will liberally subscribe to the Fund.

There are today two hundred students studying in the central institution and seventy-four in the city branch. There are moreover two night-schools which draw nearly two hundred students. The Jamia has a staff of twenty-three workers. The highest salary being paid is Rs. 265, the lowest being Rs. 35. The idea constantly before the Principal is to have volunteers who would draw just enough for their wants. The salaries amount in all to Rs. 2,300 per month, the house rent is Rs. 425 per month. The total monthly expenditure is Rs. 4,800. The regular income, including boarding fees Rs. 1,300, is Rs. 2,700. There is thus a deficit of Rs. 2,100. This was somehow met whilst Hakim Saheb was alive. Before the teachers create for themselves a name and a prestige enough to command help, the deficit must be met by the public. And the memorial cannot be considered lasting till the Jamia has a building of its own. The subscribers will, therefore, in deciding the amount of donation bear in mind what is required.

Dr. Ansari tells me that the Central Bank has generously offered to receive subscriptions for the Ajmal Jamia Fund and to

cash all cheques and drafts at par in all its branches. The address of the treasurer is 395, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay.

Finally, all donations received will be held by the treasurer on behalf of us four as trustees and will be given only after a proper trust-deed is created on behalf of the Jamia.

Young India, 19-1-1928

364. TO NO-CHANGERS

I see that the news that there was to be at Sabarmati a meeting of 'No-Changers' some time this month has found its way to the Press. Perhaps this was inevitable. But I am sorry to have to inform all concerned that the idea has been dropped for the time being at any rate. Many No-Changers have been long suggesting such a meeting with a view to the formation of a programme and a general interchange of views. The demand became insistent at Madras when the No-Changers who attended the Congress felt that on several resolutions they should have a definite joint policy and that they should be able to act as a distinct party within the Congress. Though I was not enamoured of the idea of forming a party, I was not averse to the calling of a meeting of No-Changers for the purpose of discussion. But as I came to the drafting of a circular letter, I saw that it was a difficult performance and it was an equally difficult thing to select the names of invitees. I found both to be hopeless tasks. On going into the thing deeper, I found that the convening of such a meeting might embarrass Dr. Ansari and make the working of the national programme of boycott more difficult by drawing the attention of country away from the boycott and distracting it by a discussion of matters that may well await a better opportunity. I discovered further that the formation of a 'No-Change' party without me in it was not likely to function fully and vigorously so long as I was alive, available and retained a fairly healthy and active mind. And the idea behind the suggested meeting was to form a party in which I need not take any part. It may be theoretically possible, but in practice reference would always be made to me for opinion on many matters, which opinion would be more likely to be faulty than it would be if I was present at the discussion from which the matters for opinion might have risen. These considerations made me incline to the view that the meeting might at least be postponed. Vallabhbhai, with whom I first shared my revised opinion, agreed with me. Other friends came

to the same conclusion on other and independent grounds. The idea of the meeting, therefore, remains under suspension for the time being.

I hope that the suspension will not disappoint the No-Changers. I am not sure that it is not a better arrangement. Whilst non-co-operation as a national programme is partially suspended, individual non-co-operators have an opportunity of testing the strength of their faith. Their faith will be all the stronger for standing alone without the warmth of a party. When anything assumes the strength of a creed which non-co-operation must be with those who still remain true to it, it becomes self-sustained and derives the needed support from within. Let us also have faith in the country that, when a forward movement becomes possible, all those who left non-co-operation will rejoin it whole-heartedly. I have no forward step to suggest at the present moment. Anything intermediate I can suggest may disturb the joint programme that various parties in the country are trying to evolve. Meanwhile, I can only invite the attention of No-Changers to the geat constructive programme of khadi. Those who do not appreciate it do not understand the most potent and the most operative part of non-co-operation, viz., non-violence. Non-co-operation without non-violence can never rise to the dignity of a creed and becomes merely one among many strategies in a campaign. Non-violent non-co-operation has been conceived as an infallible remedy replacing all others. And khadi is the corner-stone of its positive side. Here is a reluctant testimony in favour of khadi given by Mr. Harcourt Robertson in the *Daily Despatch*. The writer is claimed by the editor to be "one who has spent many years in British India where he was engaged in occupations demanding an intimate knowledge of market conditions and the Indian psychology". I am indebted to *The Leader* of the 12th instant for the following:[1]

> He (Mr. Robertson) ascribes the heavy drop in the amount of British cotton fabrics purchased by India not to post-war dislocation and economic stress, nor to the poverty of the masses, . . . nor to famines . . . but to the competition of Indian and Japanese mills and most of all to khaddar. . . . He regards khaddar as the real enemy. . . . He says:
>
> "Khaddar is a native-made cloth, woven on primitive looms from hand-spun yarn by unskilled, amateurish workers. It is coarse, stiff, full of knots and faults, and always looks dirty—yet there is a positive vogue

[1] Only extracts are reproduced here.

for it, even wealthy natives taking a pride in garments made from it. For khaddar represents in concrete form the slogan of the rapidly growing Nationalist party: 'India for the Indians'. Not a penny of the money spent on it leaves the country. He who wears it helps to feed India's starving millions, proclaims his country's independence and shows himself a patriot of the first water. . . . Khaddar is one of the weapons used by, and, indeed, invented by, Mahatma Gandhi in his fight against foreign rule in India. Half saint, half fanatic, and wholly patriot, Mahatma Gandhi now speaks, in his person and through the native Press, to the very hearts of India's educated classes. Non-co-operation is not dead in India because it is no longer talked. It has now reached the stage of silent and dangerous activity. . . . Let Mr. Gandhi's missionaries once rope in the masses, and India will no longer be a poor buyer, she will be no buyer at all. . . . The blow is aimed not only at cotton. It is a definite attempt to ruin the market for all British goods."

These remarks cannot but hearten those who have been working, under the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, for the spread of khaddar. . . . Mr. Robertson is alarmed and . . . he suggests that something should be done to give wide publicity in India to ideas such as "Lancashire fabrics of Indian cotton", "India's best customer is Lancashire", "To buy Lancashire cloth is to help India's cultivators". . . . It is not by interested propaganda but by substantial concessions to the national demands of Indians that the relations of the two countries can be placed on a healthy footing and the causes which are operating to the detriment of Lancashire's trade with India removed.

Needless to say that khadi is not a threat. It is the breath of national life like swaraj. The khadi movement like swaraj cannot be given up against any concessions however generous. To give up khadi would be to sell the masses, the soul of India.

Young India, 19-1-1928

365. LETTER TO V. K. SANKARA MENON

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 19, 1928

DEAR FRIEND,

With reference to your letter I send herewith Sjt. Kelappan's report[1] which please return after perusal with such remarks as you may wish to make.

Yours sincerely,

Encl. 1
SJT. V. K. SANKARA MENON
PULAYA COLONY, CHALAKUDI
(MALABAR)

From a microfilm: S.N. 14627

366. LETTER TO DR. B. C. ROY

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 19, 1928

DEAR DR. ROY,

I thank you and Dr. Sircar for your letter and the medicine you have kindly sent me. You know my repugnance to medicine. I would not take anything that contained something taken from the human body except mother's milk. The tabloids sent by you contain kidney and pancreas. Isn't this something taken from a human body? Supposing that it is taken from a sub-human animal, my objection will still stand. You know my weakness for dietetical experiments. And ever since your discovery of excess of uric acid in my system, I have felt impelled to make a radical dietetic change. The comparative stability in the Ashram has given me the opportunity and I am now taking simply fresh fruits and nuts. The diet now consists of raisin-tea, which means about 40 raisins boiled and the skin and seeds removed. This I take three times a day, and I add to it half an ounce of almond

[1] About the Pulaya Colony; *vide* "Letter to K. Kelappan", 23-12-1927.

paste each time and twice two *tolas* of coconut milk and one or two oranges each time. Coconut milk is prepared by pounding a fresh ripe coconut and extracting the juice by adding a little water and straining it through a stout piece of khadi. This I had been doing for a fortnight without any way coming to harm. The bowels are much more regular. I have not been weighed nor have I had the blood-pressure taken, but the feeling about me is good. I have purposely refrained from taking the blood-pressure and weight because it seems to me to be of no consequence, if I otherwise keep fit.

As you have taken so much interest in my health, I thought I owed you the information of the change I have made and the reason why I will not take the medicine so thoughtfully sent by you. I wish Indian medical men would make original researches and explore the possibilities of dietetic changes. It may be that the general body of people will not take to what may be called austere ways of treating diseases, but may not poor fanatics like myself have a corner in the minds and hearts of medical men? Has Indian medicine no fresh contribution to make to the medical science? Or must it always rely upon the patented nostrums that, together with other foreign goods, are dumped down upon this unfortunate soil? Why should the West have a monopoly of making researches?

This letter is not written to you for acknowledgment and reply unless you want to give me any direction. You may therefore throw it into the waste-paper basket if there is nothing more to be said to me by way of advice and guidance.

Yours sincerely,

DR. BIDHAN ROY
CALCUTTA

From a photostat: S.N. 13044

367. LETTER TO SURESH CHANDRA BANNERJI

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 19, 1928

MY DEAR SURESH BABU,

I have your letter[1]. I am glad at the happy termination of the Comilla affair. Is it a reform from within or a reform super-imposed?

With reference to my health, I have not seen my way to taking the medicine sent by Dr. Roy. It is something extracted from the human body and I have the greatest repugnance to taking any such medicine. But I have made radical change in my diet. I am now living on simply fruits and a little almond-nut paste and coconut milk. So far I have not come to grief.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 13045

368. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 20, 1928

DEAR SATIS BABU,

I have read Malaviyaji's reference to foreign-cloth boycott and mills. I recollect your reference to mill-cloth and influenza. I hope to deal with boycott in *Young India*.[2]

I have now tested the new travelling-wheel. The spokes have become shaky and the axle never moved freely and it remained as rigid as when you first saw it. You should have someone there constantly working at the wheel to test results. I want you to produce a perfect wheel and this you will not do unless one

[1] Dated 11-1-1928, which said: "As a result of satisfactory compromise of all communal cases at Comilla, we have all been acquitted. . . . I hope as a result of this . . . perfect harmony and peace will prevail at least for some time to come. . . ."

[2] *Vide* "Boycott of British Goods", 26-1-1928.

person always works at it and suggests improvements.

With love,

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1584

369. LETTER TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
Pausa Krishna 13 [January 20, 1928][1]

BHAISAHEB,

I had sent a reply[2] to your telegram. Now I want your opinion regarding the Jamia Fund.

You have raised the subject of boycott of foreign cloth. But in the same context you also mention mill-cloth. How shall I convince you that, as long as the mill-owners do not come to terms with us and we are not able to control their prices, their help will be not only useless but positively harmful. On the contrary, what happened in Bengal will be repeated and the public will lose faith in the power of boycott.

You will please tell me if you find any difficulty with my language or my handwriting. I shall write in English only if I am helpless. For my part, I prefer my imperfect *Rashtrabhasha*.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8682

[1] From the reference to Jamia Fund; *vide* also the preceding item.

[2] *Vide* "Telegram to Madan Mohan Malaviya", On or after 9-1-1928.

370. LETTER TO HEMAPRABHA DEVI DAS GUPTA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 20, 1928

DEAR SISTER,

I have your letter. I am very happy to learn that you are tranquil. I have no faith in the *shraddha* as it is performed these days. On the day of Anil's *shraddha* take only fruits. Regard the occasion as a sacrifice and do extra spinning. Recite the "Uttara-kanda" from the *Ramayana* and meditate well over the twelfth chapter of *Bhagavad Gita*.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1653

371. SPEECH AT KATHIAWAR POLITICAL CONFERENCE, PORBANDAR[1]

January 22, 1928

With a view to avoiding the possibility of any misunderstanding between the rulers and the ruled, and with a view to fuller recognition of its own limitations, as also in confirmation of the custom which has been for some time in operation, this Conference resolves that it shall not pass any resolution condemning or criticizing any individual State.[2]

Moving the above resolution Gandhiji said:

Young people would not appreciate the restriction imposed today, but I must realize my responsibility before I suggest that swaraj means the right to make mistakes. Not only have I thought over it and then suggested it, but I have drafted the resolution myself. Day before yesterday I advised the Subjects Committee not to pass the two resolutions criticizing individual States when the resolutions were moved in the Committee. It came to me as an afterthought that the advice given by me should hold good for

[1] This was the fourth Conference.

[2] This resolution is reproduced from "Weekly Letter", published in *Young India*, 26-1-1928. According to Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji was "the author of the resolution".

some time more for the same reasons for which it was tendered. If we do not resolve to this effect, our existence is in jeopardy. But one may also argue why we should have such a restriction only to postpone the death. The Committee would have turned down the resolution if it had been sponsored by any other person, but the Committee and the Kathiawaris have added to my responsibility by reposing faith in me. I hope you would do the same by passing the resolution. Young people will have to tolerate words such as 'misunderstanding', etc., which are found in the resolution.

At the Bhavnagar Session of the Conference[1] the question of only Jamnagar and Gondal States was discussed. I had met the Jamsaheb and had discussions with him. I know what the issue was and is, but due to pressure of work, I could not derive full benefit from the discussions. I cannot say at the moment whether I won or lost. I have suffered defeat at the hands of Thakore of Gondal; even then I did not allow any criticism of him individually.

At present the Conference is weak, lame and blind, and because I hold that we should not indulge in personal criticism I demanded here as well as in Bhavnagar that in the Conference no resolution or criticism on individual States should be allowed. The participants as well as the office-bearers of the Conference should be vigilant about such resolutions. They should do what is worthy of them. The ruler and the subjects should love each other and, in spite of their eagerness to point out to the ruler his shortcomings, they should put curbs on their speech and pen. Such restraint would help us a lot. Knowing our weakness, we should in future also adhere to the restraint which we have accepted in the two conferences. A person who is conscious of his inadequacy feels relieved when he confesses it before the world.

If someone asks me what the brave people would do after the imposition of the restriction, I should say that such brave people have no place in the Conference. Their place is outside the Conference. They may form another association but this Conference is not meant for satyagrahis. Even the Congress is not for them. This Conference does not restrain them. They may criticize but should not malign others. If I am asked what should be done if there is maladministration in a particular State, my answer would be that we should acquire the courage to criticize the State. If the subjects being docile bear everything quietly, we should go to work amidst them in order to help them. Injustice is there, but we should find out some other platform for

[1] Held on January 8, 1925; Gandhiji presided; *vide* Vol. XXV. pp 550-64.

its redress. The princes are mutual friends and they won't allow any one of them to be criticized. Of course, the Conference as such cannot indulge in the criticism or censure of individual States.

Apart from such criticism, you have enough work to do for khadi and for redressing the injustice inflicted on *Antyajas* by the *sanatanis* which is more severe than the injustice prevailing in the princely States.

[From Gujarati]

Prajabandhu, 29-1-1928

372. TELEGRAM TO MIRABEHN

VARTEJ,
January 23, 1928

MIRABAI
C/O JAMNADAS GANDHI
OPPOSITE MIDDLE SCHOOL
RAJKOT

RHONA'S[1] WIRE SAYS FATHER DIED PEACEFUL FRIDAY NIGHT. PEACE LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5300; also G.N. 8190. Courtesy: Mirabehn

373. SPEECH AT VARTEJ[2]

January 24, 1928

If a Hindu does service to an untouchable he does not at all oblige the latter, he obliges only himself. The Hindus, who were responsible for the existence of their so-called untouchable brothers, have committed many sins. Whatever they may do by way of self-purification and expiation for these sins would be inadequate. Therefore, whenever I have a chance to serve the untouchables, I consider it a God-sent opportunity to do some slight atonement for past sins. No one should feel elated, thinking that since he does some service he has no need at all for expiation. I want to make it clear to you that we are all jointly responsible for the ill-treatment given by a single Hindu. It

[1] Sister of Mirabehn

[2] A village in the then princely State of Bhavnagar in Saurashtra. Gandhiji laid the foundation-stone of the temple of Rama for the untouchables,

is a universal rule that the whole world is responsible for the sin committed by any one person. Both Hindus and Muslims should accept this rule. As long as there are barriers of caste and community in this world, the group as a whole is responsible for the sin of every individual member.

A temple is not merely an edifice of brick or marble, nor does it become a temple by the installation of the image of a deity. It can be called a temple only when life has been breathed into the image. There may be hypocrisy in calling the priest and making sacrificial offerings at the time of laying the foundation of the temple. The truth is that those who made a pious resolve to build a temple should, from that very moment, spend their life in deeds of penance and should surrender to the temple the fruits of all their good deeds. The managers and the priests of the temple should be leading a life of austerity so that one's heart is moved as soon as one enters the temple. If this is not going to be that type of a temple, if sufficient purity of heart and mind is not behind it, it is merely a building and, take it, it is a burden on the earth. Since it would be called a temple, the area occupied by it would go waste; it can be put to no use and it may turn out to be a pernicious institution and even a haunt of many sins. I have laid the foundation-stone of this temple in the belief that no such defects are here. To lay the foundation-stone as soon as the idea of constructing a temple occurs and then to live in the hope of erecting a temple some day is not good. Nothing is achieved in haste; the plants of religion do not grow fast. True faith, industry and patience are the prerequisites for this.

I should like to say only this to the untouchable brethren: the Hindu precept which says that no one can go to heaven before death is perfectly true. You have to work yourselves for your own uplift. Do not believe that the caste Hindus are helping you; by serving you they are in fact helping themselves. If you wish to show your mettle, wake up. Give up those faults for which the Hindus blame you and shun you. Please make it a rule that those amongst you who are given to drinking, meat-eating and so on do not enter the temple. Do not point to the defects of the so-called high-caste Hindus. As the saying goes, "those in power can do no wrong", the world will forgive them but not you. Whatever may be the defects of others, you must try to remove your own.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-1-192

374. SPEECH AT MORVI[1]

[*January 24, 1928*][2]

I sincerely thank the Maharaja Saheb, the people and members of the Modh[3] community for having welcomed my companions and myself and for presenting me with an address. I should, at any rate, tell my brothers belonging to the Modh caste that I have no right whatsoever to accept an address of welcome from them. Not even in my dreams have I imagined that I have in any manner served this caste as such; there are some gentlemen who believe that I have not only not served this caste but rather have caused it some harm. If I accept this allegation for the moment, your address merely suggests your large-heartedness. However, I am not content with this large-heartedness because, although it may be a sign of generosity, there is always an implicit understanding between the giver and the receiver of an address of welcome that the giver blesses and approves of the work that is being done by the receiver. I hesitate to accept your address, as there is no such understanding between us.

There is a purpose behind what I am saying about your small caste; for I believe that these small barriers must be broken down. I am clear in my mind that there is no room for castes in the Hindu faith; I say this to those belonging to the Modh or any other caste who happen to be present here. In the true Shastras there is no reference to castes; there is a reference only to the four *varnas*, God has washed his hands off after creating these four *varnas*. There is not even a trace of castes in the *varnadharma*. I wish to tell all of you, and plead with all, through the Modhs, that you should forget the barriers created by caste. Make use of the castes that exist today in destroying the caste system, offer them to the sacrificial fire and, if there is anything in them that teaches you self-control, practise it. A foul smell is emitted by such puddles if we do not clear them. The doctors advise us to fill up puddles. In addition to giving off a foul smell, they breed mosquitoes and these in turn prove fatal. You must

[1] One of the princely States in Saurashtra

[2] From the reference to Ramdas Gandhi's marriage which took place on January 27; *vide* p. 489.

[3] Gandhiji belonged to this sub-caste of Banias.

realize that these caste puddles are likewise fatal to man. You must realize that God would never create such a deadly organization. You will be happy if you act upon these words which I speak out of my own experience. Time goes on, doing its own work. You can go and raise your hand against it if you wish to, but you must realize that it is all futile. If we foolishly delay things, trying to defend these barriers against the march of time, it would be like the game of trying to throw dust on the sun and throwing it in our own eyes. I would not have spoken thus to you nor would I have had the occasion to do so if you had not presented me this address. Do not regard this as an insignificant matter. For many years now we have been steeped in superstition and ignorance; do not give these the name of knowledge. Comparative studies of different religions are being made in the world today, and if you examine these without any prejudice, you will find that these castes act as barriers to progress, to dharma, to swaraj and to the *Ramarajya* of which I speak so often. I would like to ask you: 'What are the achievements of the Modh caste that should prompt us to sing its praises exclusively?' We find that in many cases there is a contradiction between our thoughts and actions. Our conduct is at variance with our proclaimed beliefs. This is like the track remaining even after the disappearance of the snake. Make a Bhagiratha-*prayatna*[1] to bring about conformity between your beliefs and your conduct. In return for the address of welcome that you have given me I would ask you to make this effort. If you also accept the implicit understanding of which I spoke, I shall feel that I did well to have accepted your address and to have been born in your caste.

I have been making the most sincere efforts to bring about conformity between my thought and action and hence it was that the Modh caste used to boycott me, although the Modhs realized later on that I did not deserve boycott as I never even thought of taking any advantage of the caste system. I wish to carry forward this attempt of mine to break down caste barriers. Perhaps you do not know that I got one of my sons married outside my caste and have lost nothing by doing so. My son got bride from a devout Vaishnava family, for which he is grateful to me. I could claim that by doing so I have stolen a gem belonging to another caste. I ask those belonging to the smaller castes to hand their daughters over to me, if the latter cannot be married off.

[1] Mighty effort, like that made by Bhagiratha to bring the Ganga down to the earth

I shall get them married to good upright boys belonging to other castes, the marriage expenditure being no more than a *tulsi* leaf or a hank of yarn. If other castes do not hesitate to hand over their girls to me who has adopted an untouchable girl as daughter, why should you have any fear? I am getting my son[1] married to a Modh girl after three days. I carry on my duties in this manner and find no difficulty in doing so.

In this way, through the Modh caste, I wish to ask all those who recognize such barriers, to break them. The eighteen *varnas* are a mere myth; there are only four *varnas*, so divided on the basis of their occupational aptitudes. The customs in respect of eating and drinking with others are a part of untouchability, whereas the *varnas* are like a beautiful tree under the shade of which mankind can find shelter and nourishment for itself. The system of *varnas* is the dharma of self-control; there is no economic consideration involved in it but its object is to enable people to practise their dharma. Sages and ascetics have conceived and organized it as a thoroughfare on which one could tread the path of one's dharma, whereas it has now become the means of furthering our self-interest, our vices, and the gratification of our senses. Try to preserve the *varna* system in its pure form.

In my opinion swaraj and *Ramarajya* are one and the same thing; however, I do not often use the latter expression before audiences of men. This is so because, in this age of rationalism, if one who talks of the spinning-wheel to women talks also of *Ramarajya*, this would appear to our intelligent young men as idle sermonizing. They want swaraj, not *Ramarajya*, and of swaraj too they give strange definitions which, in my opinion, are absurd. But today, while I am standing before the Maharaja Saheb and his subjects, when the former has poured out his heart to me for an hour, I also feel like speaking out my mind before him. The concept of swaraj is no ordinary one; it means *Ramarajya*. How will that *Ramarajya* come to be established? When will it come into being? We call a State *Ramarajya* when both the ruler and his subjects are straightforward, when both are pure in heart, when both are inclined towards self-sacrifice, when both exercise restraint and self-control while enjoying worldly pleasures, and, when the relationship between the two is as good as that between a father and a son. It is because we have forgotten this that we talk of democracy or the government of the people. Although this is the

[1] Ramdas Gandhi

age of democracy, I do not know what the word connotes; however, I would say that democracy exists where the people's voice is heard, where love of the people holds a place of prime importance. In my *Ramarajya*, however, public opinion cannot be measured by counting of heads or raising of hands. I would not regard this as a measure of public opinion; the verdict of the *panch* should be regarded as the voice of God. Those who raise hands are not the *panch*. The *rishis* and the *munis* after doing penance came to the conclusion that public opinion is the opinion of people who practise penance and who have the good of the people at heart. That is the true meaning of democracy. It is not democracy but something else that is reflected in the support secured by someone like me who makes a vote-catching speech. The democracy that I believe in is described in the *Ramayana*—in the essence that is derived from my simple and straightforward reading of it. What was the manner in which Ramachandra ruled? The rulers of today assume that it is their birthright to rule and they do not recognize the people's right to voice their opinion. However, you rulers who may be regarded as the descendants of Rama, do you know how he ruled? You may also be regarded as the descendants of Krishna. And what did Krishna do? He was the most perfect servant; at the time of the *rajasuya yajna*, he washed everyone's feet. That he actually washed his subjects' feet may be fact or legend, that custom may or may not have been prevalent at the time; its underlying implication, however, is that, at the sight of his subjects, he bowed to them or rather bowed to their wishes. This very matter has been differently presented in the *Ramayana*. Through his secret agents Ramachandra elicits public opinion and finds that Sita is the object of censure in a particular washerman's home. He was well aware that this adverse criticism was groundless; Sita was dearer to him than his own life, nothing could lead to a difference between him and her; nevertheless, he renounced her, realizing that it was improper to let such criticism continue. As a matter of fact, Ramachandra and Sita had become one; they lived for and in each other; nevertheless, he thought it necessary to endure the physical absence of that very Sita for whom he led an army to battle, whose presence he desired day and night. Rama honoured public opinion in this manner; his rule is called *Ramarajya*. Even a dog could not be harmed in that State, as Ramachandra felt that all living beings were part of himself. There would be no licentious conduct, no hypocrisy, no falsehood in such a State. A people's government would function in such a truthful age. The ruler forsakes his dharma when this age ends. At-

tacks will then be made from outside the State. Germs from outside attack the body when the blood becomes impure. Likewise when society as a body gets corrupted, people who are like its limbs are subjected to external attacks.

However, when there is a bond of affection between the ruler and the ruled, the people as a body can face attacks. The authority exercised by the State should be one of love; the sceptre does not signify the exercise of brute force but rather a bond of love. The word 'Raja' is derived from the root 'raj' which means 'that which is befitting'. Hence Raja implies one who does credit to the office. The people are not as wise as he is. He has bound the people to himself with the bonds of affection and he is a servant of his servants. Shri Krishna was such a servant and he was subjected to kicks like a servant. Hence I tell the rulers and the chiefs that if they wish to be known as the descendants of Rama and Krishna, they should be prepared to put up with their subjects' kicks. They should put up with the latter's abuses; although the people may act in an irresponsible manner, the ruler cannot do so. If the rulers did, the world would come to an end.[1]

Can not this country which is primarily agricultural with seven lakhs of villages in it, save itself from this machine age? It consists of living machines and saving them is the only means of saving the country. They are the cow and her progeny, human beings and their descendants. If those who have living machines at their disposal and who can always add to this wealth, would become worshippers of the machine age, they will be cursed by humanity. If this country, which was once ruled by mighty emperors and which has thirty-three crores of living machines in it, starts worshipping this machine age, you must conclude that we are descendants of Ravana and not of Rama. These are harsh words but they are inspired by love and come from the heart. The Maharaja Saheb spoke to me sincerely. Wherever I come across sincerity, I forget myself and reciprocate with all my heart. If not today, after my death, you will realize that what I said was right. You will be cutting your own throats the day you give too much importance to the machine age. If some Chengiz Khan invades us in future and through slaughter reduces the 33 crores to 3 lakhs, we may then need machines just as Britain and the United States need them. Moreover, these two countries have established the prac-

[1] What follows was addressed to the Jains who formed a large part of the population of Morvi.

tice of robbery. Whom are you going to rob? There is no reason why our country should remain poor when it has so much natural beauty, good climate, a variety of plant life and an inexhaustible store of other resources. We have become our own enemies. It is for this very reason that I keep insisting upon khadi.

I request you to maintain an eternal bond of mutual affection. What the ruler is like will depend on his subjects and *vice versa.* What can the ruler do if the people, are dishonest, cowardly, deceitful and wicked? If the ruler is a good man, his soul may perhaps be spared; but he cannot save his subjects. If they cannot protect their women themselves, how can the ruler do so? In a town of the size of Morvi with a population of twelve to fifteen thousand—for whose good and to what end should there be so many factions and so many disputes? You should give up these things. There is no dharma other than truth and non-violence. Why should you, who are devotees of non-violence, indulge in intrigues? Passion and malice are nothing but violence. Non-violence does not merely consist in sparing the lives of bed-bugs or flies. That indeed is non-violence in its lowest form. The world is sanctified by one out of whose heart love flows constantly like a stream—these are not my words but the words uttered by Mahavira, the words uttered in the *Gita*. I have had just a slight experience of this. My mission is fulfilled by my endeavours to practise truth and non-violence. You will save yourselves if you practise these. However, your khadi or your cattle cannot be spared if you give in to hypocrisy or deceit. You will find it easy to practise what I have preached if you have a vision of the stream of truth, of the Ganga of non-violence.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-1-1928

375. BOYCOTT OF BRITISH GOODS

It is not at all surprising that the nation should wish to show resentment of the studiously insulting and defiant acts of the British Government. Every new discovery in the direction adds fuel to the fire. The latest is the abhorrence the late King Edward VII and his son, the present King, are reported to have betrayed of 'natives' and that in connection with Lord Sinha. The representatives of the nation have for years past endeavoured to demonstrate their resentment by bringing about a partial or complete boycott of British goods. It is the nation's right to bring it about if it so wishes. There is no doubt that it will produce a great effect if it could succeed to the necessary extent.

But it has been my misfortune or good fortune consistently to oppose the cry for the boycott of British goods. Though I adhere to the fundamental ground that the proposed boycott is contrary to non-violence, I wish to confine myself at present to an examination of its possibility. The fact that we have hitherto made no headway whatsoever with it, in spite of the agitation for so long a time, is proof presumptive of its very great difficulty. If we were to take even such a simple instance as soap, we shall discover that we have made no progress even in the boycott of British made soap. The Committee appointed by the Congress recommended certain articles for boycott. So far as I am aware, no such effort has yet been made in the direction of excluding even one such article from the nation's use. The use of a punitive boycott lies in the effectiveness. Anyone studying the articles of import will soon discover the utter futility of spending labour on achieving the boycott of most of these articles from the standpoint of creating an impression on the British Government. It should not be forgotten that for all these long long years, we have not been able to have a body of specialists devoted to this single task. It is the fashion in some quarters nowadays to blame me for the failure of any and every resolution that the Congress passes. I am told that a particular resolution does not succeed because I oppose it or do not work at it. There can be nothing more humiliating for a nation than to be in such an impotent state. Surely boycott of British goods was conceived and vehemently advocated before I returned from South Africa. The real and the more natural reason for the failure of the British goods boycott resolution lies in the obvious fact that no committee of

experts has yet been able to arrive at a satisfactory plan of working it out. It has been suggested that we can succeed if China has succeeded. Yes, we can if we have the will, the courage and the opportunity to regulate the boycott by armed force, by creating an army of open revolutionaries, by forcing for that specific purpose a strike of dock labourers and others connected with the handling of British goods. It seems to me that even if we have the will, we have neither the means nor yet the capacity for managing such an open armed revolution. And neither those who have advocated boycott of British goods nor the special Committee appointed by the Civil Disobedience Inquiry Committee have ever contemplated armed force. I hold, therefore, that it will be more consistent with national dignity, prestige and welfare to give up the cry, proved to be useless, and almost impossible, of boycott of British goods. The permanent necessity of advocating true swadeshi in all things capable of being produced at home is untouched by the argument against the punitive boycott.

But there is no cause whatsoever for despair. We have a means ready made and most effective of signifying our resentment over the series of wrongs being continuously heaped upon our devoted heads. If we have the will, I claim that we have the present capacity of achieving a complete boycott not merely of British cloth but of all foreign cloth. And if we do this, we not only successfully demonstrate our resentment, but we serve the masses in a manner we have never done before and we secure their co-operation in a national effort. We have got an army of workers for doing this work. We have experts who have first-hand knowledge of the thing. There is no division of opinion on the propriety of the thing. The only thing that retards our progress towards the completion of boycott of foreign cloth is our own disbelief. It is strange but tragic that through our ignorance we believe more in the possibility of achieving a boycott of certain British goods than of foreign cloth.

But even this boycott of foreign cloth cannot be achieved without a well-thought-out and prepared plan. If it is the mere boycott we want rather than the higher and the more permanent result in the shape of the economic well-being of the masses, we can do so quickly enough if we receive the co-operation of mills on our terms. Without honest and hearty co-operation of our weaving and spinning mills, to attempt to achieve the boycott with mill-cloth would be to court suicide and to run into the arms of profiteering mill-owners. If indigenous mill-cloth is to play a part in this great national effort, the mills must come to

terms with the Congress as to the kind of production and the prices to be charged. The mill agents should with the consent and co-operation of their shareholders cease to be merely trustees for themselves and shareholders, but both should become trustees for the whole nation. Then, with khadi, foreign cloth can be successfully and permanently banished from the land. But it is possible, even without the co-operation of mills, though less easy in point of time, to achieve the boycott of foreign cloth through khadi alone. Mills will still play a part, but that will be in spite of the owners. Khadi will put an effective check on their head, it will prevent a famine of cloth and it will give life and hope and work to starving millions, reinstate weavers of plain cloth in their ancient calling and will eventually, but within a short time, lead to a replacing of foreign cloth and regularizing of mill profits. Time limit can be determined by the strength of the nation's will and its capacity for sacrificing a little of its taste for fine cloth and a little money never beyond the capacity of individual users of cloth.

Young India, 26-1-1928

376. "KHADI GUIDE"

The *Khadi Guide* issued by the All-India Spinners' Association is a valuable publication containing useful introduction, the constitution of the A.I.S.A. and details of work done in the provinces where khadi is being produced. No lover of khadi and no honest sceptic should be without it. The volume is priced eight annas. It can be had of the All-India Spinners' Association, Mirzapur, Ahmedabad, and all the principal khadi depots for 9½-anna stamps.

Young India, 26-1-1928

377. LETTER TO RAJENDRA PRASAD MISHRA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 26, 1928

BHAI RAJENDRA PRASADJI MISHRA,

Your son has come to me and says that, although he and his wife wish that she should give up *purdah*, you oppose this step. He asks me what his duty is. I have told him that, for the present, he should obey you, and engage a tutoress for his wife. One can be sent from here. I would advise you to allow the couple to act in accordance with their own wishes. In this age *purdah* is not practicable, nor is it necessary. In ancient times this evil custom did not exist.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8025

378. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 27, 1928

DEAR SATIS BABU,

I am watching the interest you are taking in these amnesties and the deductions you are drawing. At the present these appear to me to be inevitable whilst we are dependent upon the Government for everything.

I have not yet got your article, but before this letter is posted, I hope to have secured it and read it. If there is anything to criticize, the criticism will go with this letter.

The cutting from *Forward* is very interesting and somewhat painful reading. I had read Lala Dunichand's original article. If Lala Dunichand reads the flaring headlines in *Forward*, he would either laugh or cry. I hope he will only laugh as I have done. This cutting is one more illustration of the

irresponsibility of which I have written in the pages of *Young India*.[1]

With love,

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

[PS.]

Your article has not yet come to hand.[2] I have now your second letter. I am sending word to Capt. Petavel. I hope your visit to Mymensing was successful and that you felt nothing the worse for it.

From a photostat: G.N. 1583

379. LETTER TO DR. B. S. MOONJE[3]

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 27, 1928

DEAR DR. MOONJE,

You have been quite discreet in writing to me. I would also agree with your general proposition. But can we enforce it only among Mussalmans, or can we begin the reform with them? Have we not got in the country innumerable purely Hindu institutions? Moreover, this Muslim University has no bar against the entry of Hindus. As a matter of fact, there are already discharged Hindu graduates of this University who are doing good national service. There are some Hindus in it even now studying. Thirdly, even a sectional institution may be called national if

[1] *Vide* "The National Congress", 5-1-1928.

[2] The letter bears the following remark from A. Subbiah: "The article, since the above note, was handed over to Bapuji."

[3] This was in reply to the addressee's letter, dated January 18, in which, referring to the fund for Jamia Millia, he wrote: "I have long been of opinion that it is such sectarian institutions which, amongst other causes, have been mainly responsible for emphasizing and exaggerating sectarian separateness, culminating eventually in such deplorable Hindu-Muslim tension . . . . I shall be pleased to associate with any national scheme of a memorial to our revered and beloved late Hakimji as . . . with any similar memorial to our revered late Swami Shraddhanand. . . . But better still, let there be a commom memorial to both Swamiji and Hakimji which shall proclaim to the world that both Hindus and Muslims have . . . resolved upon bringing about heart-to-heart unity conceived in nationalism pure and unalloyed, thus spurning the hated communalism ruthlessly and contemptuously aside . . . " (S.N. 12394).

its outlook is national and is in reality utilized for national advancement. I would like you, therefore, if you can, to support this memorial to Hakimji.

Shraddhanandji Memorial stands on a different footing and in one respect a higher footing, because of the cirumstances in which Swamiji met his death. But the memorial as it has been conceived cannot be claimed to be national. It is a purely Hindu memorial. For, the *shuddhi* work as also untouchability are things for Hindus alone to look after. The two, therefore, have to be kept separate. Each has its own special object.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 12394

380. LETTER TO F. W. STEINTHAL

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 27, 1928

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter[1]. I should be delighted to see you on Tuesday next between three and five in the afternoon. Monday you are welcome, but I shall be silent, as it is a day of silence for me. And rather than that I should miss you altogether, if you have to go away on Monday night, I would suggest your coming on Monday. Although I cannot speak to you, you will be able to say to me what you like.

Yours sincerely,

REV. F. W. STEINTHAL
C/o SALVATION ARMY SOLDIERS' HOME
DELHI

From a photostat: S.N. 13051

1 Dated 23-1-1928; the addressee and his wife were missionaries having spent about 30 years among Bengali students and Santhal villagers and were leaving India for good. They had expressed a desire to see Gandhiji.

381. SPEECH AT WEDDING OF RAMDAS GANDHI[1]

SABARMATI,
January 27, 1928

Exactly at 9.30 a.m. all gathered together on the prayer ground and Gandhiji blessed the couple in a brief speech which was as solemn as the occasion itself. It was a most moving scene in Gandhiji's life. Those present could see that Gandhiji on such occasions could be as human as any of them. He was nearly moved to tears as he referred to Ramdas and Devdas as two of his sons who had been brought up exclusively by him and under his care. The consciousness that the son had never deceived him, and had hidden none of his faults and failings from him nearly choked him with a feeling of grateful pride.

You have confessed your faults to me, but they have never alarmed me, for your frank confession has exonerated you in my eyes. I am glad that you would rather be deceived by the whole world than deceive anyone. May you live always in the same truthful way.

You will guard your wife's honour and be not her master, but her true friend. You will hold her body and her soul as sacred as I trust she will hold your body and your soul. To that end you will have to live a life of prayerful toil, and simplicity and self-restraint. Let not either of you regard another as the object of his or her lust.

You have both had part of your training here. Let your lives be consecrated to the service of the Motherland, and toil away until you wear out your bodies. We are pledged to poverty. You will, therefore, both earn your bread in the sweat of your brow as poor people do. You will help each other in daily toil and rejoice in it.

I have given you no gifts. I can give none except a pair of *taklis* and copies of my dearly beloved *Bhagavad Gita* and *Bhajanavali*. Let the cotton garlands be a shield of protection for you. Could I have procured rich gifts for you from friends, the world would rightly have ridiculed my conceit, but today it will bear testimony that I have given you only such things as become one in my position.

[1] From Mahadev Desai's "The Week", which reported this speech under the caption "A Solemn Ceremony"

Let the *Gita* be to you a mine of diamonds, as it has been to me, let it be your constant guide and friend on life's way. Let it light your path and dignify your labour. May God give you a long life of service!

Young India, 2-2-1928

382. *SPEECH AT ASHRAM, SABARMATI*[1]

January 27, 1928

In the evening he [Gandhiji] referred to the public aspect of the question. He dilated on the pernicious system which had divided the four original *varnas* into numerous castes and sub-castes and hoped that the wedding[2] just celebrated would perhaps be for the Ashram the last as between parties belonging to the same caste. It behoved people in the Ashram to take the lead in this respect, because people outside might find it difficult to initiate the reform. The rule should be on the part of the Ashram to discountenance marriages between parties of the same caste and to encourage those between parties belonging to different sub-castes. He wished girls could be kept unmarried up to 20 and even 25. Towards the end he again came back to the solemn significance of the ceremony.

Do not think that the Ashram has as its object the popularization of marriage. It has and will have the promotion of life-long *brahmacharya* as its object. It countenances marriage only to the extent that it serves as an instrument of restraint rather than of indulgence. And those who are for a life of restraint must order their lives differently from those who are for indulgence. Remember that there is always a limit to self-indulgence but none to self-restraint, and let us daily progress in that direction.

Young India, 2-2-1928

[1] From Mahadev Desai's "The Week"
[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

383. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

[After *January 27, 1928*][1]

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

Your letter. Babuji[2] must have recovered by now. What can I say to you? I am almost helpless.

I had been to Kathiawar for a few days. Mrityunjaya and Vidyavati both accompanied me then. Their health is quite good at present. The wedding of Ramdas and Nimubehn took place on Vasant Panchami[3]. It was all done in a very simple manner.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3340

384. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 28, 1928

MY DEAR C.R.

I have your letter[4]. I wish you will cease to worry about me. I can only give you my assurance that I shall do nothing wilfully to impair my health. But you know my nature. I cannot exist without dietetic experiment if I am fixed up at any place for any length of time. You know too that it has always been my intense longing to revert to fruit and nut diet or at least a milkless diet if I at all could. I find now that I can easily do so and so I have done it. Now that I can pull on with it, it would be difficult for me to go back to milk until I am satisfied that it is not possible to do without milk. I can only tell you that I shall not do anything obstinately. In accordance

[1] From the reference to Ramdas Gandhi's marriage which took place on this date

[2] Brijkishore Prasad, addressee's father

[3] The spring festival which falls on the fifth day of the bright half of the lunar month *Magha*

[4] Dated 23-1-1928

with Dr. Muthu's instructions I am not having the blood-pressure taken at all, but I am flourishing.

I discovered in Kathiawar that I could bring my voice to almost the original pitch without fatigue and without any discomfort. It was a well-thought-out, very rapidly delivered speech[1] lasting for full one hour, and there was no trace of exhaustion after it. Surely, that was some test of my progress. And I was able to talk, not merely attend committee meetings for two nights, successively lasting up to 11 o'clock.

About work too, I cannot say that I am not doing very strenuous work, but it is not beyond my capacity.

What has given Lakshmi her fever? I hope that she is all right now.

I hope to send you Rs. 5,000/- for untouchability work soon.

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 13050

385. LETTER TO R. B. GREGG

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 28, 1928

MY DEAR GOVIND,

I am glad you are now in Poona. I hope that your recovery will be rapid. I shall look forward to your coming here as soon as you can. I would like you to dismiss from your mind the idea that you owe anything either to the doctors or to me. After all, we are on this earth to serve one another without expectation of reward.

Please remember me to the Khambhattas, and when you write to me next tell me how Khambhatta is doing.

With love to you all,

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

RICHARD B. GREGG, ESQ.
C/o F. P. POCHA, ESQ.
8, NAPIER ROAD
CAMP, POONA

From a photostat: S.N. 13056

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Kathiawar Political Conference, Porbandar", 22-1-1928.

386. LETTER TO HEMAPRABHA DEVI DAS GUPTA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 28, 1928

DEAR SISTER,

I have your letter. There is no need to learn Urdu, but if you fail to understand any word used in *Navajivan* and no one in the Ashram can explain it, write to me. Prepare your own dictionary in this way.

Do not worry about Nikhil. Those who have faith in prayer should have no anxiety whatever. One implication of prayer is that every day we place our all, even our worries, at the feet of God. After that there is no place for worries.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1654

387. SPEECH AT GUJARAT VIDYAPITH[1]

January 28, 1928

It is not my intention to disqualify the graduates or to say that the executive committee has not functioned well . . . . The reason for forming a non-elective trust is that it should, instead of being opportunistic, pursue its aims. And if it does not have the strength to do so, it should entrust the work to those who have it. If its members cause delay in handing over their functions, we can either resort to satyagraha or they can be punished for wasting the people's money. The middle path would be that of going to the courts. I am not on the committee, because I do not wish to remain on committees. I have resigned from the managing committees of the Ashram and the Charkha Sangh. Now I do not wish to take work by means of authority—with iron hands—but through love, by touching your heart. By not re-

[1] A meeting of the Senate of Gujarat Vidyapith was held to frame a new constitution and remodel the institution. Gandhiji who was Chancellor presided. *Vide* also Vol. XXXVI, "Gujarat Vidyapith", 2-2-1928.

maining on the committee, I want to show others who are not on it that their responsibility is not less.

[From Gujarati]

Prajabandhu, 5-2-1928

388. A SISTER'S DIFFICULTY[1]

[*January 29, 1928*]

A sister writes:

> A year ago I heard you speaking on the supreme necessity of every one of us wearing khadi and thereupon decided to adopt it. But we are poor people. My husband says that khadi is costly. Belonging as I do to Maharashtra, I wear a sari nine yards long. Now if I reduced the length of my sari to six yards, there would be a great saving, but the elders will not hear of any such reduction. I reason with them that wearing khadi is the more important thing and that the style and length of the sari is absolutely immaterial, but in vain. They say that it is my youth that puts all these new-fangled notions into my head. But I expect that they will agree to the proposed reduction in length if you are good enough to write to me, saying that khadi ought to be used, even at the cost of the style of clothing.

I have sent the desired reply[2] to the sister. But I take note of her difficulty here, as I know that the same difficulty is encountered by many other sisters as well.

The letter in question bears witness to the strong patriotic feeling of the writer, for there are not many sisters who, like her, are ready to give up old styles or old customs on their own initiative. The number of such sisters and brothers is legion as would gladly have swaraj if it could be attained without suffering any discomfort or incurring any expenditure and in spite of their sticking to old customs, regardless of their propriety or the reverse. But swaraj is not such a cheap commodity. To attain swaraj implies the cultivation of a spirit of self-sacrifice, including the sacrifice of provincialism.

Provincialism is a bar not only to the realization of national swaraj, but also the achievement of provincial autonomy. Women perhaps are more responsible than men for keeping up this narrow spirit. Variety is worth cherishing up to a certain limit, but if the limit is exceeded, amenities and customs masquerading under

[1] Translated by V. G. Desai from the Gujarati original published in *Navajivan*, 29-1-1928

[2] This letter is not available.

the name of variety are subversive of nationalism. The Deccani sari is a thing of beauty, but the beauty must be let go if it can be secured only by sacrificing the nation. We should consider the Kachchhi style of short sari or the Punjabi *odhani* to be really artistic if the wearing of khadi can be cheapened and facilitated by their means. The Deccani, Gujarati, Kachchhi and Bengali styles of wearing sari are all of them various national styles, and each of them is as national as the rest. Such being the case, preference should be accorded to that style which requires the smallest amount of cloth consistently with the demands of decency. Such is the Kachchhi style, which takes up only 3 yards of cloth, that is, about half the length of the Gujarati sari, not to mention the saving of trouble in having to carry a smaller weight. If the *pachhedo* and the petticoat are of the same colour one cannot at once make out whether it is only a *pachhedo* or full sari. The mutual exchange and imitation of such national styles is eminently desirable.

Well-to-do people might well keep in their wardrobes all possible provincial styles of clothing. It would be very courteous and patriotic on the part of a Gujarati host and hostess to put on the Bengali style of dress when they entertain Bengali guests, and *vice versa.* But such procedure is open only to the patriotic rich. Patriotic people of the middle and poorer classes should take pride in adopting that particular provincial style which cheapens as well as facilitates the wearing of khadi. And even there they should fix their eye upon the clothing style of the poorest of the poor.

Swadeshi does not mean drowning oneself in one's own little puddle but making it tributary to the ocean that is the nation. And it can claim to contribute to the ocean only if it is and keeps itself pure. It is therefore clear that only such local or provincial customs should have a nation-wide vogue as are not impure or immoral. And when once this truth is grasped, nationalism is transmuted into the enthusiasm of humanity.

What is true of clothing is equally true of language, food, etc. As we might imitate the dress of other provinces on a suitable occasion, so might we utilize the language and other things. But at present all our energy is wasted in the useless, impossible and fatal attempt to give English the pride of place to the neglect, conscious or unconscious, of our mother tongue and all the more so, of the languages of other provinces.

Young India, 2-2-1928

389. KATHIAWAR POLITICAL CONFERENCE

The Conference met and is now over. I have no comments to offer on Shri Thakkar Bapa's[1] speech, on the attendance of the public, on the welcome given by the reception committee, on the gentleness and courtesy of the honourable Rana Saheb[2], on his presence in the Conference or the hospitality that he extended to the guests. Sheth Devidas left nothing undone so far as the reception was concerned. He acted very well on behalf of Sheth Omar Haji Amod Zaveri who had been elected the chairman of the reception committee and did not hesitate to spend his own money in providing a welcome. The speech of the President was worthy of the priest of the Bhils and the Dheds. The resolutions passed by the Conference were innocuous. These did not interest me as they did not reflect any firm determination or power to put them into actual practice. It seemed that many of those who put forward the resolutions thought that with the mere moving of them their duties were discharged. I realized that this was not a khadi conference and inwardly experienced a sense of defeat. I was alone concentrating on that subject. I realized that I had been unsuccessful; my faith in khadi, however, did not waver. I do not, therefore, wish to spell out my sorrow.

I wish to comment on one resolution alone. I am the author of that resolution and I feel that, by framing it and getting it passed, I have served the Conference and Kathiawar. That resolution runs as follows:[3]

The acceptance of this resolution became possible because of my devotion to truth. I found that this Conference could be held in Porbandar only because of some implicit understanding with the honourable Rana Saheb and that for some years to come it would be possible to hold such conferences only with such an understanding. This reflected the measure of the weakness of the Conference. No conference should be helpless to this extent. There is something wrong somewhere when such helplessness is found to exist. However, it is not got rid of by hiding it from

[1] Amritlal V. Thakkar of the Servants of India Society, who presided over the Conference

[2] The ruler of Porbandar

[3] For the text of the resolution, *vide* "Speech at Kathiawar Political Conference, Porbandar", 22-1-1928.

view. Those who try to be secretive about their sickness merely increase its intensity; they ignore remedial measures and become their own enemies.

There were two occasions in the Subjects Committee when the members introduced two resolutions criticizing individual States. I cannot claim that there was no reason for introducing these resolutions. However, I clearly saw that it was beyond the power of the Conference to admit such resolutions or act on them. The Committee ruled out these resolutions. However, I felt that the Conference could not continue to function long if it brought forward such resolutions. Hence, I advised the Conference to declare to the world its own weakness, its own limitations. I suggested that, by proclaiming the truth, the Conference will soon overcome its weakness and save itself.

This was a very bitter pill for the Subjects Committee to swallow. I, too, did not like to give such advice; however, I could see clearly what my dharma was. One should act in accordance with the truth, whether it happens to be pleasurable or painful. Does not true happiness often appear to be like poison? Although some members did not approve of this resolution, they as well as others accepted my advice because of their generosity and far-sightedness.

Thereby, my responsibility has increased. I know that I will be blamed if this resolution leads to any undesirable consequences. Not only am I not afraid of these but I believe that, if the Conference implements that resolution in good spirit and does everything that is implied by it, the result must necessarily be rewarding. Restrictions which are voluntarily imposed, self-control which is voluntarily practised, are always beneficial to anyone who undertakes them. There is no other condition which need be applied to a restriction thus voluntarily undertaken.

If the Conference abides by this resolution in thought, word and deed, it will thereby increase its capacity to fulfil its obligations within its province. Before this restriction was imposed, rulers were hesitant to allow the Conference to be held, for fear of personal criticism and censure. As the members were not clearly aware of their limitations, they made attempts, apparently glamorous but in fact futile, to rid the States of their individual shortcomings and, by doing so, were inattentive towards those tasks which, though apparently without glamour, were capable of being carried out. Now, they will either perform these useful, though uninteresting, tasks or shut up shop. As no one likes to become bankrupt, let us hope that the office-bearers of the

Conference will accomplish, willingly or unwillingly, those tasks which are worth accomplishing.

No one will interpret the above resolution to mean that in passing it we admit before the world that the States do not deserve any criticism. We should not speak ill of anyone. Although these States deserve criticism, we do admit that as we live within the boundaries of Kathiawar we do not have the capacity to criticize at the moment any State in Kathiawar or even elsewhere. We have imposed the restriction for this very reason and in the hope that we shall be able to develop the strength to make such criticisms in the future. The Committee of the Conference has the right, or rather the duty, to utilize the means at its disposal for the redressing of any grievances that it may find in any State, without bringing in resolutions in the Conference to that effect and without making any criticism against any individual State either directly or in an indirect manner at the Conference. For instance, at the time when the Conference is in session, any member of the Subjects Committee can describe the drawbacks of any State in Kathiawar to his fellow-members and ask for the guidance of the Committee on the matter. The only restriction is that he cannot move a resolution on it in the session of the Conference. He could meet the rulers or their officers and request them for redress, or if the grievances prove to be untrue he should declare them as such. In other words, the Committee can approach each and every State through proper channels, in a friendly manner. There is a possibility that if the States in question, after having come to know the idea behind this restriction, have not suddenly started acting in an irresponsible manner and do not wholly disregard public opinion, they would welcome this step taken by the Committee and would even use it as a shield. Here we should bear in mind that the Committee should not take undue advantage of such an investigation and publicly discuss the facts which have come to light; it should suffer in silence even if it cannot gain access to the States in question or gets no satisfaction even after gaining access, and realize that the remedy for the disease lies beyond its powers.

The outcome of such limited interference, or investigation if you wish to call it by that name, depends on the tact, industry and courtesy of the Committee. It will be able to achieve nothing if it forms preconceived notions about those States and becomes prejudiced against them. It should have the self-confidence to melt the hearts of rulers. Such self-confidence can be acquired only through supreme service to both the ruler and the ruled. Both

should be served in a dispassionate manner for their ultimate good and not in order to placate them. The members of the Committee should not even dream of serving their own self-interest through such service. The belief that we do not wish to do away with the existence of Indian States but only ask for an improvement in these is at the very heart of this idea. The Conference does not deserve to be held in the States at all if the idea behind it is to put an end to the system of princely States.

It is change and not destruction that can be brought about through non-violence. Democracy can be realized through the rulers; neither the ruler nor the ruled should be destroyed and whatever is good in both these can be harmoniously harnessed. In short, the relationship between the two should be one of dharma and not of brute force. The modern trend is towards destruction, whereas ancient culture is in favour of growth and nurture. Non-violence achieves the good of all, whereas violence bases the prosperity of one upon the destruction of another. Democracy is not an advantage in all respects nor is monarchy altogether harmful. Each has its own uses and it is the duty of the Political Conference to find these out, for it wishes to reach its goal by following the path of truth and non-violence.

Let us examine what the Conference can do. Khadi, the service of the untouchables, social reforms, etc., are of course there. By taking up these activities the Conference should nurture democracy. Administrative problems are not few—prohibition, education, the railway department, storage of rain water for the whole of Kathiawar, preservation of trees and their multiplication, introducing uniformity in the excise levy throughout Kathiawar as well as uniformity in its administration. Other matters, too, which would be advantageous to both the ruler and the ruled can be enumerated. Such matters are of the utmost importance and Kathiawar can subsist on these alone. By disregarding them Kathiawar will bring about its own ruin.

In order to accomplish these tasks, the help of the officer class is required more than that of the rulers. If the former are selfish or narrow-minded, even the reforms decreed by the rulers cannot be brought about. The officers are the limbs of the rulers and the officer class means the people. The ruler would necessarily improve if the people improve; however, the larger section of the public which is vocal, happens to belong to the officer class. Hence, so long as that section does not give up its self-interest and adopt the path of morality, so long as it does not cease to worry over earning its livelihood, so long as these

fearless persons do not comprehend the nature of public activities and take interest in them, there is little hope of any true reforms being introduced in the Indian States. The greater part of the effort of the Political Conference should, therefore, be directed towards and concentrated on the people, as it is the people who are like roots whereas the rulers are like fruits. If roots become sweet, fruits are bound to be sweet too.

Moreover, if the Kathiawar Political Conference is destined to add prestige to itself, there should be separate Conferences of State people in each of the more important States; these conferences may certainly criticize their own States in all matters, within the bounds of decency. These conferences should develop their own strength; even in order to do so they should engage themselves in constructive activity. The development of its strength depends on this.

Selfless and fearless workers are required for these activities. Where to find them? If those that are there, whatever their number, would keep on doing their duties silently, their number would multiply. No one should entertain the cowardly thought: 'What could I achieve all by myself?'[1]

So far I have addressed my words to the people. If the rulers could realize it, the above-mentioned resolution has greatly added to their responsibilities. To this day, they avoided and some even ignored the Conference for fear of its criticism and harsh words against them. However, in my humble opinion, they should respect the Conference by appreciating its civilized nature, satisfy its demands and use it as a bridge between the people and themselves. The evidence I have before me leads me to believe that it is not the case that all the States in Kathiawar are above criticism. I have been told that there are some very major shortcomings in these. They should come to recognize this age. The chaos that is there in the world and has affected India too, is an important symptom. It is certainly harmful in its chaotic form; however, the purpose underlying it is an honest one. People worship morality, although they follow consciously or unconsciously a path that deviates from it. They are tired of the blind forces of authority; they have become impatient. And, in their impatience, although they may forget that the remedy adopted by them is even more dangerous than the disease itself, they are eager for reforms

[1] The following paragraph was addressed to the rulers.

and for moral power. Though devotees of truth and non-violence like myself can see that morality will not be attained by their means, they are also aware that, if those in authority do not take this warning, destruction awaits them. It is necessary for rulers to take this warning. Let not perversity foreboding destruction prevail with them. I am kept alive by my unwavering faith that India will never take to the path leading to moral death. May the rulers prove my faith to be correct.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-1-1928

390. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

A worker asked whether a school for untouchables should be started in State 'A'. Gandhiji replied:

I have heard at many places and from many persons that 'A' is an unholy State; if that is true, we should not go there for any sacred work. The only exception to this would be the work of removing the unholiness of that State. As we have been living under British rule, it has acquired a certain kind of prestige; however, as we wish to break up this unjust administration from within, no other alternative is open to us. Otherwise, for any good person to go to or to live in an unholy State in order to carry out any other sacred work would amount to his going there to increase the prestige of that State.

Q. Is it necessary to have an all-India satyagraha organization for introducing reforms in Indian States?[1]

A. No. There were 60,000 people associated with my work in South Africa; how many of them continue to be satyagrahis today? However, all the twenty-two of you have been selected for the purpose of giving a helping hand whenever it becomes necessary. Whenever you take up the work—and you will not do so without exercising discretion—you will find many other people who will join hands with you. If you are discreet satyagrahis the all-India satyagraha organization that you envisage is not necessary. The talent that lies hidden within you and in the country will manifest itself when occasion arises.

Q. How should the Satyagraha Dal grow in numbers and in quality?

[1] This and the following questions were asked by members of the Satyagraha Dal.

A. Every satyagrahi should remain alert. He should not be idle or lazy, he should not be lethargic or sick, so that he can be introspective. He should keep on evaluating his own contribution to the activity which he has chosen for himself. The commander-in-chief must maintain a record of the work done by each soldier.

Q. At present many persons are engaged in running schools for untouchables and in such other activities.

A. I would ask such satyagrahis how far they have been able to convert these children to satyagraha, to what extent they have been able to become one with the children. If I may ask the children who these persons are, they should reply that they look upon their teachers alone as their fathers.

There are satyagrahi doctors amongst you. Shall I tell you what a satyagrahi doctor should be like? He would treat the poor before all others and would disregard me and others like myself who can get the services of doctors whenever they wish to. He would ask a poor man whether he required a set of false teeth because he has lost his natural ones. Such a doctor should not worry how he could thrive in his profession if he did not find people with bad teeth. You should look up *Hind Swaraj* for a detailed description of a satyagrahi doctor[1]. Such an individual should not even hope to make a living from his profession. Dr. Wanless has performed thousands of operations, people donate thousands of rupees to his institution, but he does not take a single pie out of it. Sam Higginbottom was the agricultural expert of the Scindia. He received a salary of Rs. 4,000 a month for his advice; did he, however, take a single pie of it for his personal expenditure? Yes, we do have our Dr. Chandulal[2]; he acts in a similar fashion, he knows his own job very well, he does not take a single pie for himself and the poor can readily approach him.

The satyagrahi should dedicate himself to his chosen field of activity in a spirit of purity, and adhere to it. His unflinching faith will be recognized by his truthful adherence to something which he has regarded as true although it may be untrue. Tulsidas has said: "The shell appears as a piece of silver and the sun's rays appear as a sheet of water—such is the character of illusion. Though it is ever non-existent, one cannot get rid of it."

Since we act as if the world is ultimately true, we should remain absorbed in such actions as would bring about the good of the world. That alone is beneficial.

[1] *Vide* Vol. X, pp. 35-6.

[2] Chandulal Desai, a dental surgeon and Congress leader of Gujarat

Q. Supposing State 'A' has so deteriorated that satyagraha needs to be practised there, should we set up our camp in it?

A. No, your duty is to muster strength, remaining outside it and to educate public opinion in State 'A' while doing so. When you find that you have grown in strength and that a part of the fortress of State 'A' has given way, if it appears that some Vibhishana can be found there, only then should the Satyagraha Dal invade it. Despite such an attack the Dal should bear goodwill towards the ruler while maladministration is the reason for this attack. The Satyagraha Dal can set up its camp there when all these factors are present. Meanwhile, you can educate the people of that State. You can create an awareness of their sorry plight amongst the large number of people who visit your place. You should train people of that State through boycott or by not going there even though you may have relations living there who may be celebrating a wedding or some such auspicious occasion.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 29-1-1928

391. LETTER TO V. S. BHASKARAN

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 29, 1928

MY DEAR BHASKARAN,

I have your telegram and your letter. I cannot help saying that you have been hasty in resigning. You joined the Khadi Service not to please anybody but to serve the country, and no man who joins an institution for a good cause may leave it because of an injustice felt by or done to him[1] personally. A conscientious man would regard as his own the institution to which he belongs, and, therefore, will carry out all the obligations without insisting on his rights.

If there is an injustice done, you should discuss it with Sjt. Rajagopalachariar. I, therefore, cannot approve of your running to the Ashram because you feel that you are not treated there properly. If there is any room left for reconsideration, I would like you to reconsider your position.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 13057

[1] The source has "felt or done by or to him".

392. TELEGRAM TO PUNJAB CONGRESS COMMITTEE, LAHORE[1]

January 30, 1928

GENERAL SECRETARY
PUNJAB PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE
LAHORE

HOPE EFFORTS WILL BE COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL.

GANDHI

The Tribune, 1-2-1928

393. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

January 30, 1928

DEAR SATIS BABU,

I have now got and read your statement. It is fairly accurate. I have doubts as to one or two things. You have signed it. Is it the original? Or is it copy of a statement sent to some paper? I may not print it in *Young India*.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1585

[1] This was sent in connection with the boycott of the Simon Commission and the hartal in protest against the visit of the Commission.

394. NOTE TO RAMANIKLAL MODI

[*January 30, 1928*][1]

CHI. RAMANIKLAL,

It is true that Chhaganlal is sick, but I came to know about this only when I got your note just now. The meeting can be held tomorrow at 4 o'clock. I have given an appointment to Anasuyabehn from 3 to 4. Alternatively, it can also take place in the evening at 7.30. I do not think I shall be able to work on the draft rules[2] today. But I shall prepare them before the meeting.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 14578

395. LETTER TO D. N. BANERJI

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 31, 1928

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter[3]. If you are absolutely clear in your mind about non-violence, it is your duty to make that statement before the judge and decline to give evidence and cheerfully suffer the consequence. You should believe that it would be the duty of a judge administering a penal judgment to punish those who do not obey laws of the country in which they live. And, in this instance, there can be no question of civil disobedience either, because the law of punishing witnesses who do not answer questions will be enforced even after swaraj.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. D. N. BANERJI
94, BARADEO
BENARES CITY

From a photostat: S. N. 13058

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's letter, dated January 30, 1928, requesting Gandhiji to prepare a draft of the Ashram rules and suggesting that a meeting be held on January 31 to consider the draft.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XXXVI, "Satyagraha Ashram", 14-6-1928.

[3] Dated 23-1-1928; the addressee had asked Gandhiji's advice whether he should give evidence in a criminal case.

396. LETTER TO ELISABETH KNUDSEN

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
January 31, 1928

DEAR MISS KNUDSEN,

I have your letter. I am conducting no hydropathic establishment. I give Kuhne's baths to some people in the Ashram and that is all. If you can come at all, come to the Ashram. You will be welcome guest and you will teach massage to some of the sisters here as also men. You will of course have to pay nothing for your boarding and lodging, and you will stay as long as you like. Life here is very simple, perhaps even harder, but I know that that matters little to you.

Yours sincerely,

MISS ELISABETH KNUDSEN
ADYAR
MADRAS

From a photostat: S.N. 13059

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

BRAHMIN-NON-BRAHMIN QUESTION[1]

[A CATECHISM]

During Gandhiji's tour in South India Non-Brahmin friends in various places sought interviews with him, and discussed the various aspects of the Brahmin-Non-Brahmin question. The same questions were often asked at various places, but the scope of the answers depended on the receptivity of the questioners at each place. I have brought all of them together, and arranged them in the form of a catechism. This covers all the talks in Tanjore, Chettinad, Virudhunagar and Tinnevelly. I was not present during the conversations at Madura, but I think the collected talks will cover the topics discussed there also. I omit, of course, the references to the question in public speeches at Cuddalore, Tanjore and Coimbatore which I have already given in these pages, and I omit also talks already summarized, as for instance the one at Tiruppur on superiority and inferiority.

—MAHADEV DESAI

CLEAR THE ISSUE

GANDHIJI: I want you to make your position clear to me, as I do not want to be told that I refuse to try to understand or sympathize with your viewpoint. The impression left on my mind is that the real cause of the movement is political.

NON-BRAHMIN FRIEND: The movement is older than the exponents of its political aspect. There is the social and the religious aspect as well.

A CHRISTIAN FRIEND: The rise of the Justice Party is due to the feeling that the Brahmins have a monopolizing tendency and hence cannot be trusted. I am speaking in reference only to the South Indian Brahmins of today.

[At this stage there were swift questions and answers. I summarize below Gandhiji's replies only.—MAHADEV DESAI]

GANDHIJI: But should you not in considering the question consider the course that Brahminism has taken in North India? In North India whatever status a Brahmin enjoys has been given him by the Non-Brahmins. He has no independent status. In fact the consideration in North and West India is not whether a particular leader is a Brahmin or a Non-Brahmin, but whether he can lead. In the Punjab Lalaji, a Non-Brahmin, is supreme as a leader. In the U.P. there is Malaviyaji, a Brahmin. In Bengal Surendranath Bannerjea, a Brahmin, was as much respected by the Non-Brahmins as by Brahmins. In Gujarat the

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Tanjore", 16-9-1927.

Patel Brothers, Non-Brahmins, are as much respected by the Brahmins as by Non-Brahmins.

In South India you seem to have divided Hinduism not only into two camps, but divided India into Brahmins and Non-Brahmins, which term may include Mussalmans and Christians as well. Now I want you to have a clear-cut crystallized notion of your own aims and ideals.

Supposing your aim to be merely political, that of destroying the alleged Brahmin monopoly of places of power, I can perhaps understand your inclusive definition of the term Non-Brahmin, though even here I see many difficulties.

But if you aim also at reform, or the removal of religious and social disabilities, I should find it difficult to follow your definition of Non-Brahmin so as to include Non-Hindus. There is the question of untouchability or temple-entry, for instance. With the best of motives in the world, how can a Non-Hindu effectively interfere? May a Non-Muslim dictate the reform of Islam? I fear that all Non-Hindu interference in the matter of religion will be looked upon with the gravest suspicion.

I want you therefore to have the issue as clear-cut as possible. So far as your disabilities are concerned, there can be no question about them. They are there, and for their removal you have to offer stubborn battle. But have no illusions about the disabilities either. As to places of power, if I had any choice in the matter, I should strongly advise all Brahmins to leave them all for you, but when you raise the cry of Brahmin monopoly in Khadi Service I simply cannot understand it. The whole movement serves primarily the Non-Brahmin masses, practically all members of the executive committee of the A.I.S.A. are Non-Brahmins. In South India can you in fairness contend that the Brahmins who are in Khadi Service have joined it for material gain? And so far as voluntary service is concerned, is it at all proper to raise the cry of monopoly? But even there, give me Non-Brahmins who will satisfy my requirements, and I promise that all Brahmins will vacate their places. So far as I know, the majority are there at considerable sacrifice.

THE LAW OF VARNA

QUESTION: We do not understand your emphasis on *varnadharma*. Can you justify the present caste system? What is your definition of *varna*?

ANSWER: *Varna* means pre-determination of the choice of man's profession. The law of *varna* is that a man shall follow the profession of his ancestors for earning his livelihood. Every child naturally follows the 'colour' of his father, or chooses his father's profession. *Varna* therefore is in a way the law of heredity. *Varna* is not a thing that is superimposed on Hindus, but men who were trustees for their welfare discovered the law for them. It is not a human invention, but an immutable law of nature—the statement of a tendency that is ever present and at work like Newton's law of gravitation. Just as the law of gravitation existed even before it was discovered so did the law of *varna*. It

was given to the Hindus to discover that law. By their discovery and application of certain laws of nature, the peoples of the West have easily increased their material possessions. Similarly, Hindus by their discovery of this irresistible social tendency have been able to achieve in the spiritual field what no other nation in the world has achieved.

Varna has nothing to do with caste. Caste is an excrescence, just like untouchability, upon Hinduism. All the excrescences that are emphasized today were never part of Hinduism. But don't you find similar ugly excrescences in Christianity and Islam also?

Fight them as much as you like. Down with the monster of caste that masquerades in the guise of *varna*. It is this travesty of *varna* that has degraded Hinduism and India. Our failure to follow the law of *varna* is largely responsible both for our economic and spiritual ruin. It is one cause of unemployment and impoverishment, and it is responsible for untouchability and defections from our faith.

But in quarrelling with the present monstrous form, and monstrous practices to which the original law has been reduced, do not fight the law itself.

Q. How many *varnas* are there?

A. Four *varnas*, though it is not a rigid division inherent in *varna* itself. The *rishis* after incessant experiment and research arrived at this fourfold division—the four ways of earning one's livelihood.

Q. Logically, therefore, there are as many *varnas* as there are professions?

A. Not necessarily. The different professions can easily be brought under the four main divisions—that of teaching, of defending, of wealth-producing, and of manual service. So far as the world is concerned, the dominant profession is the wealth-producing, just as *grihasthashrama* is the most dominant amongst all *ashramas*. Vaisya is the keynote among the *varnas*. The defender is not wanted if there is no wealth and property. The first two and the fourth are necessary because of the third. The first will always be very few because of the severe discipline required for it, the second must be few in well-ordered society, and so the fourth.

Q. If a man practises a profession which does not belong to him by birth, what *varna* does he belong to?

A. According to the Hindu belief he belongs to the *varna* in which he is born, but by not living up to it he will be doing violence to himself and becomes a degraded being—a *patita*.

Q. A Sudra does an act which belongs to a Brahmin by birth. Does he become a *patita*?

A. A Sudra has as much right to knowledge as a Brahmin, but he falls from his estate if he tries to gain his livelihood through teaching. In ancient times there were automatic trade guilds, and it was an unwritten law to support all the members of the profession. A hundred years ago, a carpenter's son never wanted to become a lawyer. Today he does, because he finds the

profession the easiest way to steal money. The lawyer thinks that he must charge Rs. 15,000 as fees for the exercise of his brain, and a physician like Hakim Saheb thinks that he must charge Rs. 1,000 a day for his medical advice!

Q. But may not a man follow a profession after his heart?

A. But the only profession after his heart should be the profession of his fathers. There is nothing wrong in choosing that profession; on the contrary, it is noble. What we find today are freaks, and that is why there is violence and disruption of society. Let us not confound ourselves by superficial illustrations. There are thousands of carpenters' sons following their fathers' calling, but not even a hundred carpenters' sons who are lawyers. In ages gone by there was not the ambition of encroaching on others' profession and amassing wealth. In Cicero's time, for instance, the lawyer's was an honorary profession. And it would be quite right for any brainy carpenter to become a lawyer for service, not for money. Later, ambition for fame and wealth crept in. Physicians served the society and rested content with what it gave them, but now they have become traders and even a danger to society. The medical and the legal professions were deservedly called liberal when the motive was purely philanthropic.

Q. All that is under ideal conditions. But what do you propose today when everyone is hankering after paying professions?

A. It is a sweeping generalization. Put together the number of boys studying in schools and colleges and determine the percentage of boys going in for the learned professions. Highway robbery is not open to everyone. The present seems to be an agitation for highway robbery. How many can become lawyers and Government servants? Those who can be legitimately occupied in earning wealth are Vaisyas. Even there when their profession becomes a highway robbery, it is hateful. There cannot be millions of millionaires.

Q. So far as Tamil Nad is concerned, all Non-Brahmins want to take up professions to which they were not born.

A. I reject your claim to speak on behalf of the 22 million Tamilians. I give you a formula—*Let us not want to be what everyone else cannot be.* And you can work out this proposition only on the basis of *varna* as I have defined it.

Q. You have been saying that the law of *varna* curbs our worldly ambition. How?

A. When I follow my father's profession, I need not even go to a school to learn it, and my mental energy is set free for spiritual pursuits, because my money or rather livelihood is ensured. *Varna* is the best form of insurance for happiness and for real religious pursuit. When I concentrate my energy on other pursuits, I sell away my powers of self-realization or sell my soul for a mess of pottage.

Q. You talk of releasing the energies for spiritual pursuits. Today those who follow their father's professions have no spiritual culture at all—their very *varna* unfits them for it.

A. We are talking with crooked notions of *varna*. When *varna* was really practised, we had enough leisure for spiritual training. Even now, you go to distant villages and see what spiritual culture villagers have as compared to the town-dwellers. These know no self-control.

But you have spotted the mischief of the age. Let us not try to be what others cannot be. I would not even learn the *Gita* if everyone who wished could not do it. That is why my whole soul rises against learning English for making money. We have to rearrange our lives so that we ensure to the millions the leisure that a fraction of us have today, and we cannot do it unless we follow the law of *varna*.

Q. You will excuse us, if we go back to the same question over and over again. We want to understand it properly. What is the *varna* of a man practising different professions at different times?

A. It may not make any difference in his *varna* so long as he gains his livelihood by following his father's profession. He may do anything he likes so long as he does it for love of service. But he who changes profession from time to time for the sake of gaining wealth degrades himself and falls from *varna*.

Q. A Sudra may have all the qualities of a Brahmin and yet may not be called a Brahmin?

A. He may not be called a Brahmin in this birth. And it is a good thing for him not to arrogate a *varna* to which he is not born. It is a sign of true humility.

Q. Do you believe that qualities attaching to *varna* are inherited and not acquired?

A. They can be acquired. The inherited qualities can always be strengthened and new ones cultivated. But we need not, ought not, to seek new avenues for gaining wealth. We should be satisfied with those we have inherited from our forefathers so long as they are pure.

Q. Do you not find a man exhibiting qualities opposed to his family character?

A. That is a difficult question. We do not know all our antecedents. But you and I do not need to go deeper into this question for understanding the law of *varna* as I have endeavoured to explain to you. If my father is a trader and I exhibit the qualities of a soldier, I may without reward serve my country as a soldier but must be content to earn my bread by trading.

Q. Caste, as we see it today, consists only in restrictions about inter-dining and intermarriage. Does preservation of *varna* then mean keeping these restrictions?

A. No, not at all. In its purest state, there can be no restrictions.

Q. Can they be omitted?

A. They can be, and *varna* is preserved even by marrying into other *varnas*.

Q. Then the mother's *varna* will be affected.

A. A wife follows the *varna* of her husband.

Q. Is the doctrine of *varnadharma*, as you have expounded it, to be found in our Shastras, or is it your own?

A. Not my own. I derive it from the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Q. Do you approve of the doctrine as given in *Manusmriti*?

A. The principle is there. But the applications do not appeal to me fully. There are parts of the book which are open to grave objections. I hope that they are later interpolations.

Q. Does not *Manusmriti* contain a lot of injustice?

A. Yes, a lot of injustice to women and the so-called lower 'castes'. All is not Shastra that goes by that name. The Shastras so called therefore need to be read with much caution.

Q. But you go by the *Bhagavad Gita*. It says *varna* is according to *guna* and karma. How did you bring in birth?

A. I swear by the *Bhagavad Gita* because it is the only book in which I find nothing to cavil at. It lays down principles and leaves you to find the application for yourself. The *Gita* does talk of *varna* being according to *guna* and karma, but *guna* and karma are inherited by birth. Lord Krishna says, "all *varnas* have been created by me—चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टम्," i.e., I suppose by birth. The law of *varna* is nothing, if not by birth.

Q. But there is no superiority about *varna*?

A. No, not at all, though I do say Brahminism is the culmination of other *varnas*, just as the head is the culmination of the body. It means capacity for superior service, but no superior status. The moment superior status is arrogated, it becomes worthy of being trampled under foot.

Q. *Kural* you know. Do you know that the author of that Tamil classic says there is no caste by birth? At birth, he says, all life is equal.

A. He says it as an answer to the present-day exaggerations. When superiority was claimed by any *varna*, he had to raise his voice against it. But that does not cut at the root of *varna* by birth. It is only the reformer's attempt to cut at the root of inequality.

Q. The recent practice is so distorted that may it not be the best thing to give it up altogether and begin on a clean slate?

A. Only if we were creators. We cannot by a stroke of the pen alter Hindu nature. We can find out a method of working the law, not destroying it.

Q. When authors of Shastras created new *smritis*, why not you?

A. If I could create a new creation! My state then would be far worse than Vishvamitra's and he was far greater than I.

Q. So long as you do not destroy *varna*, untouchability cannot be destroyed.

A. I do not think so. But if *varnashrama* goes to the dogs in the removal of untouchability, I shall not shed a tear. But what bearing has *varna* as defined by me on untouchability?

Q. But the opponents of reform quote you in support.

A. That is the lot of every reformer. He will be misquoted by interested

parties, but you also know that some of them want me to relinquish Hinduism. Others would banish me if they could from the Hindu fold. I have gone nowhere to defend *varnadharma,* though for the removal of untouchability I went to Vykom. I am the author of a Congress resolution for propagation of khadi, establishment of Hindu-Muslim unity, and removal of untouchability, the three pillars of swaraj. But I have never placed establishment of varnashrama dharma as the fourth pillar. You cannot, therefore, accuse me of placing a wrong emphasis on varnashrama dharma.

Q. Do you know that many of your followers distort your teaching?

A. Do I not know it? I know that I have many followers only so called.

Q. Buddhism was driven out of India because Brahmins dominated the organization. Similarly they will drive Hinduism out, if it does not serve their end.

A. Let them dare. But I am certain that Buddhism has not gone out of India. India is the country that imbibed most of the spirit of the Buddha. Buddhism must be distinguished from the spirit of the Buddha as well as Christianity from the spirit of the Christ. They were successful in driving out Buddhism, because they had assimilated the central teaching of the Buddha.

Q. The same Brahmin who assimilated the good things of Buddhism has committed the worst crime, worse than the Amritsar wrong, by not allowing untouchables entry into temples and imposing on them cruel disabilities.

A. You are right to a certain extent. But you are wrong in fixing the guilt on Brahmins. It is the whole of Hinduism that is responsible. *varnadharma* having become distorted gave rise to untouchability. There was no deliberate wickedness, but the result was a human tragedy.

Q. But so long as you use the word varnashrama dharma it brings in with it the evil associations of today.

A. The moral is, destroy the evil associations and restore *varnadharma* to its purity.

My Programme for You

Q. There is a state of utter confusion. How shall we go back?

A. All I have to say to you is do not destroy the foundation, let us try to purify. Instead you are trying to deliver a new religion to receive which no one is prepared. Brahminism is synonymous with Hinduism. That is to say, the only term we had for Hinduism was Brahminism, i.e., *Brahma Vidya,* and in trying to destroy that you are trying to destroy Hinduism. Fight the Brahmin inch by inch, when he encroaches on your right and try to reform him. But it is no use blackguarding every Brahmin. There are Brahmins and Brahmins. One is an out-and-out reformer, the other is an opponent of reform. You must range the best of the reformer Brahmins on your side, and with their help carry out the constructive part of your programme, which can bring about the salvation both of Brahmins and Non-Brahmins.

Fight the opponents of reform and tell them, 'We shall not call you Brahmins. You pursue wealth and power, and you are not learned and are not able to teach us the true religion.' Then you will not evoke any opposition from them. You will carry on a fierce agitation to bring about reform, you will boycott the schools and temples which discriminate against any Non-Brahmins. You will insist upon priests of pure character, of learning and without worldly ambition. You may build new temples if the old ones refuse to admit the so-called untouchables.

Then there is the question of inter-dining. I should not make that a ground for quarrel with anybody. But I should boycott a function where there was a dividing line.

Then I would fraternize with untouchables and try to deal by them as I should with a blood-brother, and break to pieces all little castes and sections. And therefore when I marry my boy I will go out of my way and seek a girl from other sub-sections. We are really so hide-bound today by wretched custom that you will not give me a girl to domicile in Gujarat, and you will not take a girl from Gujarat to settle in Tamil Nad.

Then I would give the untouchables religious education, a grounding in the principle of Hinduism and morality. They are leading a purely animal life today. I would induce them to refrain from eating forbidden food and live a pure and clean life. You can easily expand these questions and work out a big constructive programme.

WHAT HAS HINDUISM DONE FOR US?

Q. We see you swear by Hinduism. May we know what Hinduism has done for us? Is it not a legacy of ugly superstitions and practices?

A. I thought I had made it clear already. Varnashrama dharma itself is a unique contribution of Hinduism to the world. Hinduism has saved us from *bhaya*, i.e., peril. If Hinduism had not come to my rescue the only course for me would have been suicide. I remain a Hindu because Hinduism is a leaven which makes the world worth living in. From Hinduism was born Buddhism. What we see today is not pure Hinduism, but often a parody of it. Otherwise it would require no pleading for me in its behalf, but would speak for itself, even as, if I was absolutely pure, I would not need to speak to you. God does not speak with His tongue, and man in the measure that he comes near God becomes like God. Hinduism teaches me that my body is a limitation of the power of the soul within.

Just as in the West they have made wonderful discoveries in things material, similarly Hinduism has made still more marvellous discoveries in things of religion, of the spirit, of the soul. But we have no eye for these great and fine discoveries. We are dazzled by the material progress that Western science has made. I am not enamoured of that progress. In fact, it almost seems as though God in His wisdom had prevented India from progress-

ing along those lines, so that it might fulfil its special mission of resisting the onrush of materialism. After all, there is something in Hinduism that has kept it alive up till now. It has witnessed the fall of Babylonian, Syrian, Persian, and Egyptian civilizations. Cast a look round you. Where is Rome and where is Greece? Can you find today anywhere the Italy of Gibbon, or rather the ancient Rome, for Rome was Italy? Go to Greece. Where is the world-famous Attic civilization? Then come to India, let one go through the most ancient records and then look round you and you would be constrained to say, 'Yes, I see here ancient India still living.' True, there are dungheaps, too, here and there, but there are rich treasures buried under them. And the reason why it has survived is that the end which Hinduism set before it was not development along material but spiritual lines.

Among its many contributions the idea of man's identity with the dumb creation is a unique one. To me cow-worship is a great idea which is capable of expansion. Its freedom from the modern proselytization is also to me a precious thing. It needs no preaching. It says: "Live the life." It is my business, it is your business to live the life, and then we will leave its influence on ages. Then take its contribution in men; Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, not to speak of the more modern names, have left their impress on Hinduism. Hinduism is by no means a spent force or a dead religion.

Then there is the contribution of the four *ashramas*, again a unique contribution. There is nothing like it in the whole world. The Catholics have the order of celibates corresponding to *brahmacharis*, but not as an institution, whereas in India every boy had to go through the first *ashrama*. What a grand conception it was! Today our eyes are dirty, thoughts dirtier and bodies dirtiest of all, because we are denying Hinduism.

There is yet another thing I have not mentioned. Max Muller said forty years ago that it was dawning on Europe that transmigration is not a theory, but a fact. Well, it is entirely the contribution of Hinduism.

Today varnashrama dharma and Hinduism are misrepresented and denied by its votaries. The remedy is not destruction, but correction. Let us reproduce in ourselves the true Hindu spirit, and then ask whether it satisfies the soul or not.

Young India, 24-11-1927

APPENDIX—II

KHADI COLLECTIONS IN SOUTH INDIA AND CEYLON[1]

1. COLLECTIONS IN SOUTH INDIA

Collections made during Gandhiji's tour in Tamil Nad, Kerala and South Kanara:

Chettinad

Karaikudi, Rs. 6,524-9-7; Devakotta, Rs. 4,218-13-4; Paganeri, Rs. 4,120-10-3; Kottayur, Rs. 2,532; Kanadukathan, Rs. 2,416-9-6; Kadiapatti, Rs. 1,267-11-6; Amaravatipudur, Rs. 1,186-6-1; Siravayal, Rs. 1,099-11-9; Kothamangalam, Rs. 701-4; Pallathur, Rs. 601; Nachiyapuram, Rs. 505; Nemathanpatti, Rs. 501; Kulivarai, Rs. 401; Nachandupatti, Rs. 301; Lakshmipuram, Rs. 250; Virachilai, Rs. 121; Panayapatti, Rs. 101; Jayakondapuram, Rs. 101; Manachai, Rs. 100; Mahanagari, Rs. 13; Total Rs. 27,062-12-0.

Madras City

Total Rs. 21,772-9-4.

Madura

Madura, Rs. 13,472-7-6; Tirumangalam, Rs. 782-13-8; Tevaram and Gudalur, Rs. 143-0-7; Kombai, Rs. 100; Total. Rs. 14,498-5-9.

Coimbatore

Coimbatore, Rs. 4,720-15-9; Tiruppur, Rs. 3,117-2-6; Pollachi, Rs. 2,204-3-6; Gobichettipalayam, Rs. 1,231-15-11; Erasanampatti, Rs. 270; Vellakoil, Rs. 100; Kinattukadavu, Rs. 100; Avinasi, Rs. 34-11-9; Cheyur, Rs. 13-4-0; Total Rs. 11,802-5-5.

Trichinopoly

Trichinopoly, Rs. 8,132-12-11; Srirangam, Rs. 113-9-2; Lalgudi, Rs. 1,957-13-3; Karur, Rs. 896-10-3; Manachanallur, Rs. 151; Total Rs. 11,251-13-7.

Tanjore

Mayavaram, Rs. 3,282-3-2; Mannargudi, Rs. 3,040-14-11; Kumbakonam, Rs. 2,923-10-11; Tanjore, Rs. 1,041-7-10; Rajapayan Chavadi, Rs. 288-12-0; Valangiman, Rs. 201; Needamangalam, Rs. 104; Tiruvadamarudur, Rs. 79-12-0; Papanasam, Rs. 23; Morupatti, Rs. 15; miscellaneous, Rs. 5; Total Rs. 11,004-12-10.

Tinnevelly

Tinnevelly, Rs. 3,165-6-0; Tuticorin, Rs. 2,616-5-4; Koilpatti, Rs. 1,416-11-1;

[1] *Vide* "Speech in Reply to Municipal Address, Trichinopoly", 17-9-1927 and "Speech to Chettiar Community, Colombo", 13-11-1927.

Srivaikuntan, Rs. 1,016-4-0; Nanguneri, Rs. 654-1-6; Panagudi, Tisayanvilai, Selvamarudur, etc., Rs. 434-13-6; Sivagiri, Rs. 530-9-6; Shankarankoil, Rs. 227-14-0; Kalladakurichi, Rs. 142-6-11; Sivakasi, Rs. 79-8-0; Tentiruperai, Rs. 51; Kalugumalai, Rs. 51; Kariyalur, Rs. 34-8-0; Mudukumindam, Rs. 31; Sankarankoil, Rs. 16; Total Rs. 10,467-7-9.

British Malabar

Calicut, Rs. 4,113-9-4; Palghat, Rs. 2,236-2-7; Otapalam and Shornur, Rs. 1,205-15-0; Agatitera, Rs. 314-1-9; Taliparamba, Rs. 101; Ponnani, Rs. 69-15-0; Badagara, Rs. 542-5-6; miscellaneous, Rs. 11; Total Rs. 8,594-1-2.

Ramnad

Rajapalayam, Rs. 3,642; Virudhunagar, Rs. 1,832-14-6; Paramakudi, Rs. 1,179-7-8; Sattur, Rs. 516-9-3; Tirupatur, Rs. 431-15-6; Srivalliputtur, Rs. 66-8-6; Total Rs. 7,669-7-5.

North Arcot

Vellore, Rs. 2,626-11-11; Arni, Rs. 2,178-10-5; Gudiyatham, Rs. 1,312-4-2; Arcot, Rs. 626-15-3; Pallikondan, Rs. 76-2-6; Tiruvannamalai, Rs. 50; Total Rs. 6,870-12-3.

Travancore

Trivandrum, Rs. 2,389-4-9; Nagercoil, Rs. 1,253-2-1; Alleppey, Rs. 974-9-0; Quilon, Rs. 858-2-9; Haripad, Rs. 335; Karuvatta, Rs. 313-0-3; Kartigapalli, Rs. 235-5-3; Kayangulam, Rs. 105; Changannur, Rs. 111; Karunagapalli, Ochara, Ayagrampur, Tottapali, Rs. 80-2-3; Total Rs. 6,654-10-4.

Cochin

Ernakulam, Rs. 2,519-0-1; Trichur, Rs. 1,898-11-5; Cochin, Rs. 900; Ollur, Rs. 885-13-0; Tirupanithura, Rs. 272-5-6; Machad, Rs. 13-8-0; Total Rs. 6,489-6-0.

South Arcot

Cuddalore, Rs. 3,087-12-7; Chidambaram, Rs. 1,965-7-6; Tindivanam, Rs. 260; Total Rs. 5,313-4-1.

Chingleput

Conjeevaram, Rs. 1,410-13-9; Adambakkam, Rs. 1,219-9-3; Tiruvallur, Rs. 775-13-5; Poonamallee, Rs. 369-3-4; Sripermbudur, Rs. 56-7-6; Total Rs. 3,831-15-3.

Salem

Krishnagiri, Rs. 2,201-1-7; Hosur and Shoolagiri, Rs. 705-10-0; Puduppalayam, Rs. 205-6-0; Total Rs. 3,112-1-7.

Pudukkotta

Total Rs. 1,156-11-0.

Miscellaneous, Rs. 299-5-5.

Grand total: Tamil Nad and Kerala, Rs. 1,57,851-13-0.

Karnatak

South Kanara and Miscellaneous, Rs. 5,944-6-5.

Received for Gujarat Flood Relief, Rs. 130; Total receipts Rs. 1,63,926-3-5.

Less bank expenses, Rs. 20-13-8, Rs. 1,63,905-5-9

In Urban Bank, Mylapore, Rs. 1,54,777-13-9; in Tiruppur Khadi Vastralaya, Rs. 5,810-5-0; in A.I.S.A., Erode, Rs. 3,317-3-0; Total Rs. 1,63,905-5-9.

Young India, 10-11-1927

2. KHADI COLLECTION IN CEYLON

(We give below a consolidated list of khadi collections in Ceylon during Gandhiji's tour. Donors and contributors are requested to scrutinize the list and draw attention to discrepancies or omissions, if any, to Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar, Gandhi Ashram, Tiruchengodu. —MAHADEV DESAI)

Colombo: Sea Street Chettiars, Rs. 4,001.00; Sea Street Clerks, Rs. 2,335.50; Sea Street Cooks, Rs. 103.25; Indian Youth's Sangha, Rs. 101.00; Vivekananda Society, Rs. 2,050.00; Nalanda Vidyalaya, Rs. 400.00; Ananda College, Rs. 400.86; Kaili Merchants, Rs. 205.00; Maruthuvakula Sangha, Rs. 401.00; Hewavitarana, Weaving School, Rs. 330.50; Sindhi Merchants, Rs. 1,754.50; Ceylon Labour Union, Rs. 2,726.71; Nadar Sangham, Rs. 201.00; Sea Street Lodge, Rs. 102.00; Zahiria College, Rs. 400.00; Tamil Ladies' Union Rs. 1,445.00; Sinhalese Ladies, Rs. 1,000.00; Young Men's Hindu Association, Rs. 101.00; Colombo Tamil Union, Rs. 1,251.50; Parsis, Rs. 1,001.00; Vidya Vinoda Sabha, Rs. 629.20; Reddiyar Mahajana Sangham, Rs. 3,001.00; Gandhi Sangham, Rs. 75.00; Slave Island General, Rs. 1,101.00; Young Bharatars' League, Rs. 110.11; Marava Community, Rs. 351.00; Ceylon Indian Association, Rs. 1,801.00; Young Lanka League, Rs. 60.00; Young Men's Buddhist Association, Rs. 615.45; Law College, Rs. 320.00; Malayalis, Rs. 260.00; Proprietors of Rice and Curry Shops, Rs. 1,250.00; Clerks of Rice and Curry Shops, Rs. 550.00; Ceylon National Congress, Rs. 600.00; General Reception, Colombo, Rs. 6,408.00; Auction, Rs. 350.00.

Sjt. Velliappa Nadar, Rs. 76.00; Sjt. Phillipiah, Rs. 50.00; Mrs. H. C. Abeywardne, Rs. 50.00; Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Fernando, Rs. 500.00; Mrs. W. A. DeSilva, Rs. 500.00; Dr. A. T. Kuriyan, Rs. 15.00; Sjt. B. V. Bhimiah Chettiar, Rs. 50.00; Mr. Billimoria, Rs. 25.00; Mr. K. S. Narayana Aiyar, Rs. 25.00; Mr. A. E. DeSilva, Rs. 200.00; Mr. H. W. Periera, Rs. 100.00; Mr. Velayutham Pillai, Rs. 51.00; Miss Bandaranayake and others, Rs. 110.00; other miscellaneous collections, Rs. 365.85; Further collections general, Rs. 285.00; Total, (Colombo) Rs. 40,195.43.

Kurumagala: Chettiars Rs. 1,021.00; General, Rs. 1,500.00; Puttalam and Kalpitiya Clerks, Rs. 35.00; Kandigama and Hellipola, Rs. 112.00.

Negombo, Rs. 1,812.00; Kochukadawn, Rs. 432.00; Paligoda National League, Rs. 30.72.

Chilaw, Rs. 1,530.82; Nainamadama, Rs. 128.06.

Matale: Maruthuwakula Sangham, Rs. 55.00; Buddhist School, Rs. 25.00 General, Rs. 1,093.20; Mr. Ponniah, Rs. 150.00; School foundation, Rs. 251.41; Total Rs. 1,574.61.

Kandy: Dharmaraja College, Rs. 111.00; Shri Rahula School, etc., Rs. 91.00; General, Rs. 4,500.00; Indian Youths' Sangham, Rs. 71.16; Maruthuwakula Sangham, Rs. 141.00; Indian Association, Rs. 1,187.50; Mr. P. S. Devadasu Pillai, Rs. 10.00; Miscellaneous Rs. 38.50; Total (Kandy) Rs. 6,150.16.

Pandarawela, Rs. 601.63; Diyatalawa, Rs. 103.00; Haputala, Rs. 351.50.

Badulla: General, Rs. 4,000.00; Y.M.C.A., Lunugala, Rs. 215.00; Meeting collections, Rs. 289.37; Miscellaneous, Rs. 35.60; Total Rs. 4,539.97.

Dikoya, Rs. 135.00; Talawakale, Rs. 315.00; Nannwaya, Rs. 150.00; Wellimada, Rs. 215.25; Dikawela, Rs. 500.00.

Nuwara Eliya: General, Rs. 4,097.15; Meeting collections, Rs. 555.31; Total Rs. 4,652.46.

Hatton: Carfax Labourers, etc., Rs. 100.00; Castlereagh Labourers, Rs. 135.00; Kanganis' Association general purse, Rs. 2,500.00; Bazar, Rs. 558.00; Miscellaneous, Rs. 210.00; Total Rs. 3,503.00.

Prigatana, Rs. 194.20; Wattawela, Rs. 230.50.

Nawalapitiya: General, Rs. 1,322.39½; Y.M.W.A., Rs. 39.61; Miscellaneous Rs. 77.90; Total Rs. 1,439.90½.

Kaduganchholai, Rs. 45.00.

Gampola: General, Rs. 175.00; School, Rs. 51.00; Cooks, Rs. 41.00; Maruthuvakula Sangham, Rs. 41.00; R. Letchmanan Chettiar, Rs. 250.00; Miscellaneous, Rs. 16.34; Total Rs. 2,149.34.

Tekkala Mahajana Sabha, Rs. 364.00, Kadugannawa, Rs. 864.14.

Kegala: General, Rs. 762.40; Auction, Rs. 30.00; Meeting collections, Rs. 110.17; Total Rs. 902.57.

Attangalla, Rs. 210.00; Miscellaneous from Kandy to Colombo, Rs. 162.68½.

Ambalangoida: Tamils, Rs. 265.85; Miscellaneous, Rs. 14.73; Total Rs. 280.58; Balpitiva, Rs. 50.00; Dadunduwa, Rs. 55.65; Tirangama, Rs. 129.21; Telawala School, Rs. 11.30.

Moratuwa, Rs. 588.90; Kalatura, Rs. 1,695.85; Horanna, Rs. 472.93; Panadura, Rs. 1810.00.

Galle: Udugama Kanganis, Rs. 200.00; Tamilians, Rs. 58.00; Mahajana Sabha, Rs. 180.45; Chettiars, Rs. 501.00; Kanakupillais, Rs. 351.00; Dramatic Performance, Rs. 200.00; Mahinda College, Rs. 465.00; Auction, Rs. 20.00; Miscellaneous, Rs. 16.00; Further collections general, Rs. 49.10; Total Rs. 2,040.55.

Matara: General, Rs. 899.45; Chauffeurs' Union, Rs. 100.00; School-children, Rs. 100.00; Maruthuwakula Sangham, Rs. 60.45; Miscellaneous, Rs. 30.00; Individual gifts: Mrs. Prasad, Rs. 50.00; Mr. N. Gunasekara, Rs. 50.00;

Mr. J. B. Cardozo, Rs. 25.00; Mr. Sundaram Pillai, Rs. 25.00; Hon. Aweyasekhara, Rs. 500.00; Total Rs. 1,839.90.

Godagama, Rs. 150.00; Akmimana, Rs. 250.00; Ambalawatta, Rs. 21.60; London Ceylonese students by T.M.O., Rs. 53.00; another by M.O. Rs. 6.00; Ganeunulla, Rs. 200.54.

Trincomalee, Rs. 392.00; Auction, Rs. 10.00; Total Rs. 402.00.

Palai, Rs. 20.51; Nathandiya Estate, Rs. 45.50.

Total for mofussil excluding Colombo and Jaffna: Rs. 46,529.54.

Jaffna: General, Rs. 1,957.10; Depressed Classes Service League, Rs. 180.00; Village Committees, Rs. 709.75; Meeting Collections, Rs. 32.49; Parameshwara College, Rs. 536.60; Manipari Hindu College, Rs. 501.00; Malayan subscribers through *Hindu Organ*, Rs. 852.50; Chunnakam, Rs. 651.46; Auction, Rs. 25.00.

Hindu College, Rs. 707.00; Kandarodai School, Rs. 223.59; Indians in Jaffna, Rs. 1,301.25; Vishvakarma Co-operative Society, Rs. 115.45; Chunnakam Depressed Class School Foundation, Rs. 10.00; Indians' meeting, Rs. 47.06; Anurudhapura, individual, Rs. 30.00; Chavalacheri, Rs. 213.50; Koppai, Rs. 144.00; Tondamanuru, Rs. 400.00; Viyamagatunur temple, Rs. 90.81.

Valvettiturai, Rs. 470.25; Auction, Rs. 6.00.

St. Pedro, Rs. 1,014.49; Through Secretary, Jaffna Urban Council, Rs. 52.42; Chivateru, Rs. 259.57; Jaffna labourers, Rs. 594.98; Meeting, Rs. 48.95½; Chemma Street, Rs. 107.00; St. John's College, Rs. 258.80; Central College, Rs. 276.00; Ramanathan Girls' College, Rs. 1,111.08; Malakan English School, Rs. 101.00; Tellipalai, Rs. 617.20; Chulipuram and Chenkanai, Rs. 309.00; Victoria College, Rs. 280.00; Sithankarai School, Rs. 105.00; Vaddukkodai, Rs. 35.00; Jaffna College, Rs. 600.00; Karainagar, Rs. 538.40; Jaffna Railway Station collections and through Lady Ramanathan, Rs. 129.60; Morlay and Kolapuram, Rs. 280.40; Islands Kayts, Rs. 650.03; Pandateruvur English School, Rs. 31.32; Hospital matron and nurses, Rs. 10.00; Vavuniya, Rs. 125.00; Madavadri, Rs. 106.75; Auction, Rs. 1,147.00; Miscellaneous, Rs. 297.25; Total Jaffna collections, Rs. 18,291.05½.

Grand total	Rs. 1,05,016.02½
Less deficit in value of sovereigns (54) at 7 cents	3.78
Bad coins	12.12½
Net total	1,05,000.12
	= 1,05,000-2-0

	Rs.	A.	P.
Deposited in the Bank (M.C.U.B.)	1,04,487	5	4
Cash on hand	148	9	5
Cheques awaiting realization having been returned as irregular	364	3	3
Total	1,05,000	2	0

Young India, 22-12-1927

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW TO C. KUTTAN NAIR[1]

October 4, 1927

Mr. T. K. Madhavan has received a wire[2] today from Gandhiji asking him to start civil disobedience in regard to the ban on untouchables in regard to the use of Thiruvarppu temple roads.

Mr. C. Kuttan Nair, a co-worker of Mr. Madhavan, interviewed Gandhiji this morning at Virudhunagar in regard to the Thiruvarppu temple roads questions. Mahatma Gandhi went through all the papers which Mr. Kuttan Nair submitted . . . and after ascertaining the real facts . . . said:

From the facts before me, I have no hesitation in saying that a very strong case has been made out for starting satyagraha in the matter of opening out the roads to the *avarna* Hindus in Thiruvarppu.

Asked whether by satyagraha he meant that form that was adopted at Vaikom, he said emphatically "No". He said it should be comprehensive enough to include all forms of civil disobedience. He said he was even for mass civil disobedience at Thiruvarppu, provided there is an atmosphere of non-violence. Failure on the part of the Travancore Government to follow up the Vaikom settlement in logical way resulted in the present muddle and that, he said, would strengthen the demand for temple-entry for *avarnas*. "Yes", he said, "temple-entry is coming."

Gandhiji promised to try to visit Thiruvarppu on his way to Ernakulam.

The Hindu, 6-10-1927

APPENDIX IV

INTERVIEW WITH SHRI SHANKARACHARYA OF KANCHI[3]

In the latter half of 1927, Mahatma Gandhi was touring the South to popularize Congress objectives and collect funds. Gandhiji, who had already heard about the Acharya through Mr. A. Rengaswamy Iyengar, Manager, *The Hindu*, and Mr. S. Satyamurti, decided to call on him. The historical meeting took place on October 15, 1927 in a cattle-shed adjoining the Acharya's camp at Nellicheri in Palghat. Only a few persons were present, but no Press reporter.

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Trivandrum", 10-10-1927.

[2] Not available

[3] *Vide* footnote 1, p. 142.

Gandhiji paid his respects to the Acharya in the traditional Hindu style. The overwhelming saintliness of the sannyasi, clad in ochre-coloured khadi and seated on the floor, made a deep impression on Gandhiji's mind. A spell of silence ensued. Then the Acharya spoke a few words in Sanskrit by way of welcome and asked him to be seated. Gandhiji sat down and said that he was not used to speaking in Sanskrit, but could understand the language somewhat, and wanted permission to speak in Hindi. Since the Acharya could understand Hindi, this arrangement suited both. Gandhiji spoke in Hindi and the Acharya in Sanskrit.

The Acharya expressed appreciation of Gandhiji's efforts to spiritualize politics, since healthy national life should be based on spiritual foundations and nations devoid of religion and dependent on materialistic forces were bound to perish. On the question of temple-entry for Harijans the Acharya thought that it might amount to a form of *himsa* to wound the feelings of those who still believed in the supremacy of Shastras and tradition. The discussion continued on spiritual matters; it was open-hearted and reflected mutual regard. There was no disputation or polemics. . . .

The conversation went on for about an hour. . . . On taking leave, Gandhiji said that he was immensely benefited by this visit, and that he would keep the Acharya's wishes in mind and fulfil them to the best of the capacity.

As Gandhiji would take no food after 6 p.m., Mr. C. Rajagopalachari went and reminded him about his meal at 5.30 p.m. But Gandhiji said: "This talk with the Acharya is my food for the day." Then the Acharya offered to Gandhiji a big citrus fruit which he gladly accepted, saying he had a special liking for the fruit.

Later at a public meeting held at Coimbatore the same evening, when Gandhiji was questioned about his discussion with the Acharya, he said that it was private and confidential and hence Press reporters were kept out.

[From Tamil]

Shri Jagadguru Divya-Charitram, pp. 121-3

APPENDIX V

GANDHI-IRWIN INTERVIEW[1]

I

. . . When he saw the Viceroy, the interview was a cold affair. Lord Irwin placed in his hands the Secretary of State's announcement regarding the Simon Commission, and when asked whether that was all the business, Lord Irwin said "Yes". Gandhi felt that a one-anna envelope would have reached it to him. . . .

The History of the Indian National Congress, Vol. I (1885-1935), p. 315

II

In fact, Gandhi and Irwin had a long conversation at this first meeting at which they listened to one another with exemplary patience and courtesy. Gandhi was in good humour . . . promising to convert the Viceroy to khaddar.[2] He listened to Irwin attentively, and, after he had finished, developed his own general political philosophy at length. He saw no need for British tutelage. He was prepared to wait indefinitely rather than ask India to impair the self-respect she ought to have. Parliament, he said, should give India what India desired. Therefore he felt remote from all these things. Congress was trying to serve an idea—the idea of non-co-operation which would ultimately impress itself upon the mind of Parliament. Communalism would pass; the communities had been trying to absorb India.

It was Irwin's experience of the Mahatma's incoherent political technique. He found him vague . . . but without bitterness, and in conversation pleasantly reasonable. But there was little in his . . . discourse on which the Viceroy's practical mind could take hold. . . . Only when Gandhi and the others said that they attached little importance to the procedure by which the representatives from the Indian Legislature would be invited to confer with the English Parliamentary Committee did Irwin seize the chance of telling them sharply that if they refrained from availing themselves of this opportunity, they would be committing a political blunder of the first magnitude and would hopelessly prejudice British opinion against their case.

Halifax: The Life of Lord Halifax, p. 246

[1] On 2-11-1927; *vide* "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 11-11-1927.
[2] *Vide* Vol. XXXVI, "Letter to Lord Irwin", 26-4-1928.

III

It is believed in certain quarters that His Excellency the Viceroy was prompted by a mandate from Whitehall that India should accept as *fait accompli* an absolutely Parliamentary Commission consisting of representatives of all British political Parties; and that those who might prove to be pestilential agitators should be told beforehand that the Government would stand no more bluff and nonsense.

Indians will, however, be associated in the work of the Commission in the capacity of assessors. Even in regard to the selection of assessors the communal clamour will be heard; but this can be silenced by appointing only official Indians as assessors. This is believed to be the substance of the Viceroy's lecture.

Mr. Gandhi said that such a Commission would be a failure as self-respecting Indian opinion could not but resent such deliberate insult. It can lead only to boycott of the Commission. However, to him, and to those of his way of thinking the Commission was not of any consequence, however well composed it might be and however liberal its terms of reference. Asked if he would advise his countrymen, particularly the Swarajists, to co-operate with the Commission in its investigation, Mr. Gandhi said that it was none of his business. He was not prepared to induce anybody to co-operate with the Commission. The Swarajists were all veterans in political warfare and not children to be dictated to. Mr. Gandhi, however, assured His Excellency that he would not himself initiate a movement for boycott of the Commission as he had long since abdicated the political functions of leadership to the Swarajists. Mr. Gandhi, in conclusion, said that he would not—as indeed he could not—prevent anyone from participating in the work of the Commission.

The Hindu, 9-11-1927

APPENDIX VI

EXTRACT FROM S. D. NADKARNI'S LETTER[1]

. . . What *varna* nearly always has been is the artificially maintained, hard-and-fast division, otherwise called 'caste'. Be it fourfold, as it was 'once upon a time', or forty-thousand-fold, as it is today, it is in essence the same. It is a system of monopolies and restraints distributed according to mere birth. . . .

. . . Now, Mahatmaji, if you and I will be true Hindus, and not 'Vaishya' and 'Brahmin' only—for I own to 'Brahmin' parentage—then we are bound to worship the memory of Shambuka, the 'Sudra' ascetic of Rama's days, as the oldest asserter of religious freedom we know, and the first martyr on record in India or perhaps the whole world. Mahatmaji, are you prepared to do that with me? Thus only may the sting be taken out of the anti-Brahmin agi-

[1] *Vide* '*Varnashrama* and Its Distortion" 17-11-1927.

tation, and a united Hinduism arise out of the ashes of this age-old struggle. I say, let Shambuka be vindicated, if Hinduism is to live yet and prosper. . . .

. . . If it were so, all Gandhis should stick to grocery and Ramanama, and never—never—take to social and political reform of their country, unless perhaps, after finishing the householder's life, they have formally entered upon the fourth *ashrama* at the prescribed age. Else, it would be trenching upon "the spiritual preserve" of Brahmins and Kshatriyas for a Vaisya to take to politics! But would it be a salutary rule? And how stands the law of heredity? . . .

. . . If we but think over it, it will be clear as daylight that we have overdone the principle of heredity by investing it with tyrannous sanctions in the name of religion. . . .

. . . Just as you of Vaisya parentage hold the Vaisyas as a class responsible for the economic downfall of India, so I who happen to be Brahmin by birth have no hesitation in declaring that the Brahmins as a class are responsible for the enslavement, both spiritual and economic, of all India. From those to whom much was given, much was expected. But alas, a narrow bigotry born of a short-sighted selfishness stood in the way of their giving of their best to the community. And great has been the fall of all Brahminists, and with them of the Brahmins.

Young India, 17-11-1927

APPENDIX VII

EXTRACT FROM STATEMENT BY THE VICEROY ON THE INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION[1]

November 8, 1927

When the Commission has reported and its report has been examined by the Government of India and His Majesty's Government, it will be the duty of the latter to present proposals to Parliament. But it is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to ask Parliament to adopt these proposals without first giving a full opportunity for Indian opinion of different schools to contribute its view upon them.

And to this end it is intended to invite Parliament to refer these proposals for consideration by a Joint Committee of both Houses, and to facilitate the presentation to that Committee both of the view of the Indian Central Legislature by delegations who will be invited to attend and confer with the Joint Committee, and also of the views of any other bodies whom the Joint Parliamentary Committee may desire to consult.

In the opinion of His Majesty's Government the procedure contemplated fulfils to a very great extent the requisites outlined above.

[1] *Vide* "Interview to the Associated Press", 1-12-1927.

Such a Commission, drawn from men of every British political party and presided over by one whose public position is due to outstanding ability and character, will evidently bring fresh, trained, and unaffected judgment to bear upon an immensely complex constitutional issue.

Moreover, the findings of some of its own members can count in advance upon a favourable reception at the hands of Parliament, which will recognize them to speak from a common platform of thought, and to be applying standards of judgment which Parliament will feel instinctively to be its own. For myself I cannot doubt that the quickest and surest path of those who desire Indian progress is by the persuasion of Parliament, and that they can do this more certainly through members of both Houses of Parliament than in any other way. The Indian nationalist has gained much if he can convince Members of Parliament on the spot, and I would therefore go further and say that if those who speak for India have confidence in the case which they advance on her behalf, they ought to welcome such an opportunity being afforded to as many members of the British Legislature as may be thus to come into contact with the realities of Indian life and politics.

Furthermore, while it is for these reasons of undoubted advantage to all who desire an extension of the Reforms that their case should be heard in the first instance by those who can command the unquestioned confidence of Parliament, I am sanguine enough to suppose that the method chosen by His Majesty's Government will also assure to Indians a better opportunity than they could have enjoyed in any other way of influencing the passage of these great events. For not only will they, through representatives of the Indian Legislatures, be enabled to express themselves freely to the Commission itself, but it will also be within their power to challenge in detail or principle any of the proposals made by His Majesty's Government before the Joint Select Committee of Parliament, and to advocate their own solutions. It should be observed moreover that at this stage Parliament will not have been asked to express any opinion on particular proposals and therefore, so far as Parliament is concerned, the whole field will still be open.

IRWIN,
Viceroy and Governor General

India in 1928-29, pp. 372-3

APPENDIX VIII

THE INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION[1]

Whereas We have deemed it expedient that the Commission for which provision is made in Section 84A of the Government of India Act should forthwith be appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions, in British India, and matters connected therewith, and should report as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing therein, including the question whether the establishment of second chambers of the local legislature is or is not desirable:

Now know ye that We, reposing great trust and confidence in your knowledge and ability, have on the advice of Our Secretary of State for India acting with the concurrence of both Houses of Parliament authorized and appointed, and do by these presents authorize and appoint you, the said Sir John Allsebrook Simon (Chairman); Harry Lawson Webster, Viscount Burnham; Donald Sterling Palmer, Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal; Edward Cecil George Cadogan; Stephen Walsh[2]; George Richard Lane-Fox and Clement Richard Attlee to be Our Commissioners for the purposes aforesaid.

And for the better effecting the purposes of this Our Commission, We do by these presents give and grant unto you, or any three or more of you, full power at any place in Our United Kingdom or in India or elsewhere in Our Dominions to call before you such persons as you shall judge likely to afford you any information, upon the subject of this Our Commission: and also whether in Our said Kingdom, or in India, or elsewhere in Our Dominions to call for information in writing; to call for, have access to and examine all such books, documents, registers and records as may afford you the fullest information on the subject, and to inquire of and concerning the premises by all other lawful ways and means whatsoever, including the appointment by the Commission with the sanction of Our Secretary of State for India, of any person or persons to make subordinate enquiries and to report the result to the Commission:

And We do by these presents authorize and empower you or any of you to visit and inspect personally such places as you may deem it expedient so to inspect for the more effectual carrying out of the purposes aforesaid;

[1] *Vide* "Interview to the Associated Press", 1-12-1927.

[2] Stephen Walsh having resigned for reasons of ill-health, Vernon Hartshorn was appointed in his place on December 7, 1927.

And We do by these presents will and ordain that this Our Commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you, Our said Commissioners, or any three or more of you, may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof, and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued from time to time by adjournment:

And We do further ordain that you, or any three or more of you, have liberty to report your proceedings under this Our Commission from time to time if you shall judge it expedient so to do:

And Our further will and pleasure is that you do, with as little delay as possible, report to Us under your hands and seals, or under the hands and seals of any three or more of you, your opinion upon the matters herein submitted for your consideration.

Given at Our Court at Saints James's the Twenty-sixth day of November One thousand nine hundred and twenty-seven; in the Eighteenth Year of Our Reign.

By His Majesty's Command
W. JOYNSON-HICKS

India in 1927-28, pp. 385-6

APPENDIX IX

RESOLUTION ON HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY[1]

PART A—POLITICAL RIGHTS

This Congress resolves: (1) That in any future scheme of constitution, so far as representation in various legislatures is concerned, joint electorates in all the provinces and in the Central Legislature be constituted; (2) That, with a view to giving full assurances to the two great communities that their legitimate interests will be safeguarded in the Legislatures such representation of the communities should be secured for the present, and if desired, by the reservation of seats in joint electorates on the basis of population in every province and in the Central Legislature:

Provided that reciprocal concessions in favour of minorities may be made by mutual agreement so as to give them representation in excess of the proportion of the number of seats to which they would be entitled on the population basis in any province or provinces and the proportions so agreed upon for the provinces shall be maintained in the representation of the two communities in the Central Legislature from the provinces.

In the decision of the reservation of seats for the Punjab, the question

[1] Passed at the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Madras on December 26, 1927; *vide* letters to Ansari, 25-12-1927 and 28-12-1927.

of the representation of Sikhs as an important minority will be given full consideration;

3(a) That the proposal made by the Muslim leaders that the reforms should be introduced in the N.W.F. Province and British Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces is, in the opinion of the Congress, a fair and reasonable one, and should be given effect to, care being taken that simultaneously with other measures of administrative reform an adequate system of judicial administration shall be introduced in the said provinces;

(b)(i) That with regard to the proposal that Sind should be constituted into a separate province, this Congress is of opinion that the time has come for the redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis—a principle that has been adopted in the constitution of the Congress;

(ii) This Congress is also of opinion that such readjustment of provinces be immediately taken in hand and that any province which demands such reconstitution on linguistic basis be dealt with accordingly;

(iii) This Congress is further of opinion that a beginning may be made by reconstituting Andhra, Utkal, Sind and Karnatak into separate provinces;

4. That, in the future constitution, liberty of conscience shall be guaranteed and no legislature, Central or Provincial, shall have power to make any laws interfering with liberty of conscience;

'Liberty of conscience' means liberty of belief and worship, freedom of religious observances and association and freedom to carry on religious education and propaganda with due regard to the feelings of others and without interfering with similar rights of others;

5. That no bill, resolution, motion or amendment regarding intercommunal matters shall be moved, discussed or passed in any legislature, Central or Provincial, if a three-fourths majority of the members of either community affected thereby in that legislature oppose the introduction, discussion or passing of such bill, resolution, motion or amendment.

"Intercommunal matters" means matters agreed upon by such a joint Standing Committee of both communities —of the Hindu and Muslim members of the legislature concerned appointed at the commencement of every session of the legislature.

Part B—Religious and Other Rights

This Congress resolves that:

1. Without prejudice to the rights that Hindus and Mussalmans claim, the one to play music and conduct processions wherever they please and the other to slaughter cows for sacrifice or food wherever they please, the Mussalmans appeal to the Mussalmans to spare Hindu feelings as much as possible in the matter of the cow and the Hindus appeal to the Hindus to spare Mussalman feelings, as much as possible in the matter of music before mosques.

And therefore, this Congress calls upon both the Hindus and

Mussalmans not to have recourse to violence or to law to prevent the slaughter of a cow or the playing of music before a mosque.[1]

2. This Congress further resolves that every individual or group is at liberty to convert or reconvert another by argument or persuasion but no individual or group shall attempt to do so, or prevent its being done by force, fraud or other unfair means such as the offering of material inducement. Persons under eighteen years of age should not be converted unless it be along with their parents or guardians. If any person under eighteen years of age is found stranded without his parents or guardian by persons of another faith he should be promptly handed over to persons of his own faith. There must be no secrecy as to the person, place, time and manner about any conversion or reconversion, nor should there be any demonstration of jubilation in support of any conversion or reconversion.

Whenever any complaint is made in respect of any conversion or reconversion, that it was effected in secrecy or by force, fraud or other unfair means, or whenever any person under eighteen years of age is converted, the matter shall be enquired into and decided by arbitrators who shall be appointed by the Working Committee either by name or under general regulations.

The resolution was moved by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and was seconded by Mr. Abul Kalam Azad.

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

Report of the Forty-second Indian National Congress at Madras, pp. 61-2

APPENDIX X

LETTER FROM JAWAHARLAL NEHRU[2]

ALLAHABAD,
January 11, 1928

MY DEAR BAPUJI,

The Working Committee is now meeting in Banaras and so I cannot go to Bombay or Sabarmati for some time.

I am loath to inflict another letter on you so soon after my last but I am very much troubled by your criticisms of the Congress resolutions and I feel I must write to you again. You are always very careful with your words and your language is studiously restrained. It amazes me all the more to find you using language which appears to me wholly unjustified. You have

[1] This section, according to *The Hindu*, 27-12-1927, was originally drafted by Gandhiji and adopted with a few verbal changes by the Congress.

[2] *Vide* Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 17-1-1928.

condemned in general language the proceedings of the Subjects Committee and specially selected some resolutions for greater criticism and condemnation. May I point out that it is always unsafe to judge on hearsay evidence? You were not present yourself and it is quite conceivable that the opinions you may have formed after a personal visit to the Subjects Committee may have been different. Yet you have chosen to condemn and judge unfavourably the whole Committee, or at any rate a great majority of it, simply basing your judgment on the impressions of a few persons. Do you think this is quite fair to the Committee or the Congress? You have referred to discipline and to the Working Committee as the National Cabinet. May I remind you that you are a member of the Working Committee and it is an extraordinary thing for a member on the morrow of the Congress to criticize, and run down the Congress and its principal resolutions. There has been a general chorus of congratulation on the success of the Madras Congress. This may be wrong or without sufficient basis but undoubtedly there was this general impression in the country and atmosphere counts for a great deal in all public work. And now most people who thought so feel a bit dazed at your criticisms and wonder if their previous enthusiasm was not overdone or mistaken.

You have described the Independence Resolution as "hastily conceived and thoughtlessly passed". I have already pointed out to you how the country has discussed and considered this question for years past, and how I have personally thought over it, discussed it, spoken about it in meetings, written about it and generally been full of it for the last five years or more. It seems to me that under the circumstances no stretch of language can justify the use of the words "hastily conceived". As for "thoughtlessly passed" I wonder if you know that the resolution was discussed in the Subjects Committee for about three hours and more than a dozen speeches for and against were made. Ultimately as you know it was passed almost unanimously both in the Committee and the open Congress. Were all the people in the Committee and the Congress who voted for it "thoughtless"? Is this not rather a large assumption? And why should it not be said with greater truth that the small minority opposed to the resolution were mistaken? You mention that last year the resolution was rejected by the Committee. I do not know what inference you draw from this but to me it seems obvious that this can only mean that the Committee and the Congress have been eager to pass it in the past as in the present but refrained from doing so out of regard for you. I hope you will agree with me that it is not healthy politics for any organization to subordinate its own definite opinion on a public issue out of personal regard only.

I am not referring here to the merits of the resolution. But I shall only say this that after prolonged and careful thought a demand for independence and all that this implies has come to mean a very great deal for me and I attach more importance to it than to almost anything else. I have thought over every word you said the other day in Madras on this question and it

has merely confirmed me in my opinion. But I doubt if anyone outside a small circle understands your position in regard to this. I am sure that none of the others — liberals, etc., — who want dominion status think in the same way with you. Yesterday Sir Ali Imam addressed a meeting here on the Simon boyott. I also spoke for a few minutes and like King Charles' head independence cropped up and I laid stress on it. After the meeting Ali Imam told me that I did well in laying stress on this; he and his friends would probably come round to this position sooner or later but for the time being they had to be a little restrained as they wanted to carry many people with them. I am sure most liberals welcome the Independence Resolution, whatever they may say about it, as they feel that it strengthens their position. But whether they like it or not, it passes my comprehension how a national organization can have as its ideal and goal dominion status. The very idea suffocates and strangles me.

I took no special interest in the resolution on the boycott of British goods chiefly because I felt that it would meet with your strong disapproval and the boycott could not succeed unless a more or less unanimous effort was made. But I have no doubt that it can be made into a partial success if there was some unanimity in our own ranks. You must have read about the wonderful effectiveness of the boycott in China. There was nothing special in China which we have not got and there is no fundamental reason why we cannot succeed where they succeeded. But granting that it is not likely to succeed is it such a laughing matter after all? Has our boycott of foreign cloth by khaddar succeeded so remarkably? Has our spinning franchise succeeded? They have not but you do not hesitate to press them on the country and the Congress because you felt, and rightly, that they would be good for the nation even if they did not wholly succeed.

I remember how Kelkar, Aney and Co., even as members of the Working Committee, used to make fun of the Congress resolutions on khadi, and it is very painful for me to think that you are also ridiculing important Congress resolutions. The Kelkars and Aneys do not count and I do not care what they say or do. But I do care very much for what you say and do.

Having singled out two resolutions for your special condemnation you casually refer to the others as "several irresponsible resolutions". Excepting the Unity Resolution every other resolution of the Congress may come under this heading. And so the labours of the 200 and odd persons in the Subjects Committee and the larger number in the Congress are summarily and rather contemptuously disposed of. It is very hard luck on the unhappy persons who, though wanting perhaps in foresight and intelligence, did not spare themselves and tried to do their best. We have all sunk to the level of the shoolboys' 'debating society' and you chastize us like an angry school-master, but a school-master who will not guide us or give us lessons but will only point out from time to time the error of our ways. Personally I very much wish

that we were more like real schoolboys, with the life and energy and daring of schoolboys, and a little less like the right honourable and honourable gentlemen who are for ever weighing the pros and cons and counting the cost.

You know how intensely I have admired you and believed in you as a leader who can lead this country to victory and freedom. I have done so in spite of the fact that I hardly agreed with anything that some of your previous publications — *Indian Home Rule*, etc., — contained. I felt and feel that you were and are infiinitely greater than your little books. Above everything I admire action and daring and courage and I found them all in you in a superlative degree. And I felt instinctively that, however much I may disagree with you, your great personality and your possession of these qualities would carry us to our goal. During the N. C. O. period you were supreme; you were in your element and automatically you took the right step. But since you came out of prison something seems to have gone wrong and you have been very obviously ill at ease. You will remember how within a few months or even weeks you repeatedly changed your attitude — the Juhu statements, the A.I.C.C. meeting at Ahmedabad and after, etc., — and most of us were left in utter bewilderment. That bewilderment has continued since then. I have asked you many times what you expected to do in the future and your answers have been far from satisfying. All you have said has been that within a year or eighteen months you expected the khadi movement to spread rapidly and in a geometric ratio and then some direct action in the political field might be indulged in. Several years and eighteen months have passed since then and the miracle has not happened. It was difficult to believe that it would happen but faith in your amazing capacity to bring off the improbable kept us in an expectant mood. But such faith for an irreligious person like me is a poor reed to rely on and I am beginning to think if we are to wait for freedom till khadi becomes universal in India we shall have to wait till the Greek Kalends. Khadi will grow slowly, and if war comes it will grow very fast, but I do not see how freedom is coming in its train. As I mentioned before you our khadi work is almost wholly divorced from politics and our khadi workers are developing a mentality which does not concern itself with anything outside their limited sphere of work. This may be good for the work they do, but little can be expected from them in the political field.

What then can be done? You say nothing, — you only criticize and no helpful lead comes from you. You tell us that if the country will not even take to khadi how can we expect it to do anything more difficult or daring. I do not think the reasoning is correct. If the country does not go ahead politically by one method, surely it is up to our leaders to think of other or additional methods.

Reading many of your articles in *Young India* — your autobiography, etc., —I have often felt how very different my ideals were from yours. And I

have felt that you were very hasty in your judgments, or rather having arrived at certain conclusions you were over-eager to justify them by any scrap of evidence you might get. I remember how in an article on the "Two Ways" or some such title — you gave some newspaper cuttings from America about crimes and immorality and contrasted American civilization with Indian. I felt it was something like Katharine Mayo drawing conclusions from some unsavoury hospital statistics. Your long series of articles based on the French book — "Towards Moral Bankruptcy" — also made me feel the same way. You misjudge greatly, I think, the civilization of the West and attach too great an importance to its many failings. You have stated somewhere that India has nothing to learn from the West and that she had reached a pinnacle of wisdom in the past. I certainly disagree with this viewpoint and I neither think that the so-called *Ramaraj* was very good in the past, nor do I want it back. I think that western or rather industrial civilization is bound to conquer India, maybe with many changes and adaptations, but none the less, in the main, based on industrialism. You have criticized strongly the many obvious defects of industrialism and hardly paid any attention to its merits. Everybody knows these defects and the utopias and social theories are meant to remove them. It is the opinion of most thinkers in the West that these defects are not due to industrialism as such but to the capitalist system which is based on exploitation of others. I believe you have stated that in your opinion there is no necessary conflict between capital and labour. I think that under the capitalist system this conflict is unavoidable.

You have advocated very eloquently and forcefully the claims of the *Daridranarayana*—the poor in India. I do believe that the remedy you have suggested is very helpful to them and if adopted by them in large numbers will relieve to some extent their misery. But I doubt very much if the fundamental causes of poverty are touched by it. You do not say a word against the semi-feudal zamindari system which prevails in a great part of India or against the capitalist exploitation of both the workers and the consumers.

But I must stop. I have already exceeded all reasonable limits and I hope you will forgive me. My only excuse is my mental agitation. I did not want to become the secretary of the A.I.C.C. as I wanted perfect freedom to say and do what I considered necessary. But Ansari pressed me on the ground that many of my resolutions and specially the Independence Resolution, had been passed by the Congress and I thus had full freedom to work on my own lines. I could not answer this argument and had to accept. Now I find that every effort is being made to belittle and ridicule these very Congress resolutions and it is a painful experience.

Yours affectionately,
JAWAHARLAL

From a photostat: S.N. 13039

ADDENDA

1. *LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, SABARMATI,
January 11, 1928

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Your letter.

I hope Chand[1] is out of the wood.

My point[2] is not that you had not thought out any of your resolutions, much less the Independence one; but my point is that neither you nor anyone else had thought out the whole situation and considered the bearing and propriety of the resolutions. The finest resolutions may be irrelevant or out of place. But you should read carefully my articles on the Congress. The special article on Independence will be out tomorrow.

The Unity resolution needs much working out.

Do come whenever you can and when you come bring your work here and give yourself enough time.

This is scrappy but can't give you more just now.

Yours,
BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1928. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

2. *LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*[3]

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, SABARMATI,
January 15, 1928

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have your letter which I appreciate more than anything else you could have written to me, because you are absolutely frank and I am glad for having written that article if only to draw from you what you have been keeping to yourself all these long years. But of this later.

[1] Eldest daughter of Vijayalakshmi Pandit

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 4-1-1928, pp. 432-3.

[3] This letter is referred to in "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 17-1-1928, p. 469, as not available.

This I am dictating merely to tell you that poor Brockway is in a bad way. I understand that he will have to undergo another operation of a far more serious nature and might have to stay in India for many more months. I understand too that he has come with an understanding with the A.I.C.C. arrived at by Father that his passage to and fro should be paid by the Congress. If that is so, I suppose we should defray his hospital expenses also and perhaps these in any case seeing that he was comig to the Congress. I understand that he will be soon in arrears about his hospital charges. Will you please inquire and do the needful, even set the wire in motion if necessary.

I understand that the Madras Committee has already paid nearly Rs. 400. The hospital charges alone are said to amount to Rs. 12 per day. I am writing to Srinivasa Iyengar also.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1928. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

3. *TELEGRAM TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

SABARMATI,
January 26, 1928

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
ANAND BHAWAN
ALLAHABAD

YOUR LETTER. MINE[1] WAS WRITTEN MERELY GIVE YOU RELIEF FREEDOM. HAVE NO DESIRE PUBLISH ANYTHING FROM YOU. DO BRING FATHER IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. LOVE.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1928. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 17-1-1928, pp. 469-70.

SOURCES

Aaj : Hindi daily published from Banaras.

(*The*) *Amrita Bazar Patrika* : English newspaper of Calcutta which first appeared in 1868 as a Bengali weekly; a daily since 1891.

Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne (Gujarati) : Ed. Manibehn Patel, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1957.

(*A*) *Bunch of Old Letters* : Ed. Jawaharlal Nehru, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1958.

(*The*) *Ceylon Daily News* : English daily of Ceylon.

(*The*) *Ceylon Observer* : English daily of Ceylon.

GANDHI SMARAK SANGRAHALAYA, New Delhi : Central Museum and Library of Gandhian literature and documents; *vide* Vol. I, p. 349 (1958 edition) and p. 341 (1969 edition).

Halifax : The Life of Lord Halifax : The Earl of Birkenhead, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1965.

(*The*) *Hindu* : English newspaper published from Madras, started as a weekly in 1878, became a tri-weekly in 1883 and a daily since 1889.

(*The*) *Hindustan Times* : English daily published from New Delhi.

(*The*) *History of Indian National Congress, Vol. I* : Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Padma Publications Ltd., Bombay, 1946.

Letters of Srinivasa Sastri : Ed. T. N. Jagadisan, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1963.

MANUSCRIPT OF MAHADEV DESAI'S DIARY : Kept in Swarajya Ashram, Bardoli.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI.

Navajivan (1919-31) : Gujarati weekly (with occasional bi-weekly issues) edited by Gandhiji and published from Ahmedabad; first issued on September 7, 1919. It was converted from *Navajivan ane Satya*, Gujarati monthly (1915-1919). Also issued in Hindi from August 19, 1921.

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ORISSA GOVERNMENT RECORDS.

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad (Hindi) : Kaka Kalelkar, Jamnalal Bajaj Trust, Wardha, 1953.

Prajabandhu : Gujarati weekly published from Ahmedabad.

Report of the Forty-second Indian National Congress at Madras, 1927.

Sabarmati, Vol. VI, Issue 4 : Magazine of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad.

SABARMATI SANGRAHALAYA : Library and records containing documents relating to Gandhiji's South African period and Indian period up to 1933; *vide* Vol. I, p. 349 (1958 edition) and p. 341 (1969 edition).

Samaj : Oriya Weekly published from Cuttack, became a daily in April, 1930.

The Searchlight : English daily published from Patna since 1918.

The Tribune : English daily published from Lahore since 1881, shifted to Ambala in 1948.

Vithalbhai Patel : Life and Times, Book Two : R. A. Moramkar, Shree Laxmi Narayan Press, 364 Thakurdwar, Bombay.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon : Mahadev Desai, Current Thought Press, Madras, 1928.

Young India (1919-31) : English weekly founded by Jamnadas Dwarkadas at Bombay; from May 7, 1919, published bi-weekly under Gandhiji's supervision; from October 8, 1919, issued as a weekly from Ahmedabad with Gandhiji as editor.

CHRONOLOGY

(*September 16, 1927 — January 31, 1928*)

September 16: Gandhiji continued his khadi tour in South India; spoke at Tanjore on Brahmin-Non-Brahmin question.

September 17-20: Addressed various meetings at and near Trichinopoly.

September 21: Addressed citizens' meeting, Pudukottah.

September 22: Visited Nachandipatti, Kadiapatti and Kanadukathan.

September 23: Visited Pallathur, Kottayur and Amaravatipur.

September 24: Addressed women's meeting, Karaikudi; also spoke at Devakottah.

September 25-26 : At Karaikudi.

September 27: Visited Siravayal, Tirupattur and Paganeri.

September 28: Arrived in Madura; received address from Municipal Council and spoke at public meeting.

September 29: At Madura; spoke at a meeting of Saurashtra community.

September 30: Addressed public meeting at Tirumangalam; conference with Justice Party leaders.

October 1: At Paramakudi.

October 2: At Virudhunagar; gave interviews to Rev. J. Himmerstrand and Non-Brahmin Youth League; spoke at public meeting.

October 3: At Virudhunagar; silence day.

October 4: At Rajapalayam; spoke at women's meeting and public meeting; opened a khadi vastralaya.

October 5: At Koilpatti.

October 6: At Tuticorin; spoke at public meeting.

October 7: At Tinnevelly; spoke at public meeting.

October 8: Addressed a meeting at Nagercoil.

October 9-10: At Trivandrum; met the Maharaja and Maharani of Travancore and discussed the question of the entry of untouchables to the Thiruvarppu temple roads.

October 11: At Quilon.

October 12: At Alleppey.

October 13 : At Ernakulam and Cochin; reannounced prize of Rs. 1,000 for the best essay on cow-protection; published an article on the "Neill Statue Satyagraha".

October 14: At Trichur.

October 15: At Palghat; had conversation with Shankaracharya of Kamakoti Peetham; spoke at public meeting.

October 16: At Coimbatore; spoke at public meeting; C. Rajagopalachari announced that Gandhiji would rest at Coimbatore until October 21.

October 17: At Coimbatore; exchanged telegrams with V. J. Patel on proposed meeting with the Viceroy.

October 18: Spoke at Pollachi and returned to Coimbatore.

October 19-21 : At Coimbatore; published an article on "Why I Am a Hindu".

October 22-24: At Tiruppur; spoke at public meeting; accepted Viceroy's invitation to see him on November 2.

October 25: At Calicut.

October 26: At Nileshvar, Kasargode and Mangalore; spoke at public meeting at Mangalore.

October 27: Left Mangalore by sea for Bombay on way to Delhi to see the Viceroy. Unity conference convened under the auspices of Indian National Congress at Calcutta; Gandhiji did not participate in it.

October 29: Arrived in Bombay; gave interview to the Press on the appointment of Assessors on the Royal Commission, and on Hindu-Muslim unity.

October 30: Left Bombay for Delhi.

November 1: In Delhi; attended meeting of Khadi Pracharak Mandal.

November 2: In Delhi met the Viceroy, Lord Irwin; visited Jamia Millia Islamia and spoke to students.

November 3: Reached Ahmedabad at night.

November 4: At Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad.

November 5: Left for Bombay at night.

November 6: Arrived in Bombay.

November 7: Left for Ceylon on board s.s. *Colaba.*

November 8: Viceroy announced personnel of Royal Commission headed by Sir John Simon.

November 12: Gandhiji arrived in Colombo at night.

November 13: In Colombo; in interview to Press said that Congress was his conscience-keeper regarding his opinion on Simon Commission; spoke at meetings of Chettiar community and Vivekananda Society.

November 14: In Colombo; silence day.

November 15: In Colombo; received address from municipality; addressed meetings of students, Buddhists and Christians.

November 16: In Colombo; spoke to Christian missionaries and labourers.

November 17: Left Colombo and visited Paliyagoda, Negombo, Madampe, Chilaw, Kurunegala and Katugastota.

November 18: Spoke at public meetings at Matale and Kandy; visited the Dalada Maligawa and saw the Tooth Relic.

November 19: At Badulla.

November 20: At Nuwara Eliya.

November 21: At Kandy; silence day.

November 22: Returned to Colombo and spoke at meetings of the Parsis, the Ceylon National Congress and others.

November 23: Visited Panadura and Galle.

November 24: Spoke at Galle and Matara.

November 25: Returned to Colombo and spoke at farewell meetings.

November 26-29: At Jaffna; addressed meetings.

November 30: Left Ceylon and arrived in Ramnad; addressed public meeting.

December 1: Arrived in Madras; gave interview to Associated Press on the Statutory Commission; left for Orissa tour.

December 3: Spoke at public meeting at Chicacole.

December 4: Visited Ichchapuram, Palasa, Baruva and Kaviti in the morning and spoke at women's meeting, Chicacole. In the evening spoke at Students' meeting at Berhampur.

December 5: At Berhampur; silence day.

December 6: Addressed public meeting at Berhampur. Also visited Aska, Gohra, Russelkonda; spoke at meetings and then proceeded to Boirani for night's rest.

December 7: Visited Purushottampur, Kodala and Khallikote.

December 8: At Banpur.

December 9: Went to Bolgarh for complete rest on account of rise in blood-pressure.

December 10: Spoke at public meeting, Bolgarh.

December 11-12: Rest at Bolgarh.

December 13: At Begunia, Sakhigopal, and Puri; refrained from visiting Jagannath temple.

December 14: Reached Balasore.

December 15-17: At Balasore.

December 18: Arrived in Cuttack; cancelled all programmes and took rest on account of high blood-pressure.

December 20: Gandhiji's speech was read out at a public meeting in Cuttack.

December 21: Left Cuttack to attend the Annual Session of Indian National Congress at Madras.

December 23: Spoke at Hindi and Khadi Exhibition, Madras.

December 23-28: In Madras, had discussions with Congress leaders.

December 26: Annual Session of the Indian National Congress began in Madras.

December 27: Gandhiji's draft resolution on Indians in South Africa was adopted unanimously by the Indian National Congress.

December 28: Gandhiji left for Bombay.

December 29: Death of Hakim Ajmal Khan.

December 30: Gandhiji arrived in Bombay; gave interview to Press on Congress resolutions on Hindu-Muslim Unity and Independence.

December 31: Arrived at Sabarmati.

1928

January 1 to 21: Gandhiji stayed at Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati.

January 7: Sent message to National Muslim University, Delhi.

January (Second Week) : Friends of the International Fellowship stayed at the Ashram for three days.

January 15: Gandhiji spoke at the convocation of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad.

January 22: Spoke at Fourth Kathiawar Political Conference at Porbandar.

January 23: At Vartej.

January 24: Laid the foundation-stone of a temple for untouchables at Vartej; also spoke at Morvi.

January 27: Gandhiji's third son, Ramdas Gandhi, was married at Sabarmati. Gandhiji proposed changes in the constitution of Gujarat Vidyapith.

January 30: Wished success to hartal against the Simon Commission.

January 31: Went to stay among the students of the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya.

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ERRATA

PAGE	FOR	READ
170 Line 5	November 4-29 Colombo	November 4-19 Colombo
172 Item 110, source-line	S. N. 9410	S. N. 9412
229 Item 163, line 3	the President and the Secretary	the General Secretary
427 Item 317, para 4, line 9	finishes	finished
466 Line 4 from bottom	Spencer	Spenser
469 Footnote 2	The letter is not available.	*Vide* Addenda-2, pp. 545-6.

CORRIGENDUM

PAGE	FOR	READ
167 Line 16	to have to say	to have my say